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Among this week's contributors

In the interests of the Church

Georges Duby

medievalist, Pierre Guichard, who

underlines, at the level of family

relations, the opposition between

"Western" features and "Eastern"

ones, and characterizes the "Western"

system by the biliterality of alliances,

the decisive power of the family unit,

traditions of monogamy and exogamy,

the less oppressed position of women,

and a different conception of honour—

attached less to persons, especially

female ones, than to the possession of

land or a fortune. Goody's critique

establishes first of all that the contrast

is much less clear-cut in Andalusia

between structures stemming from the

indigenous Christian culture and

others introduced by the conquerors

from the southern shores of the

Mediterranean. So far as the criteria of

differentiation are concerned, he

shows that the differences are less in

respect of honour, polygyny and the

position of women; that what counts is

not the orientations of genealogical

awareness or the rules for the

transmission of offices, but the mode of

devolution of goods, which is bilateral

or "divergent" (ancestral land is

received by heirs of both sexes) in the

Eastern system as in the Western, to

the south as to the north of the

Mediterranean basin, so that "many

features thought to be characteristic of

modern European kinship have a long

history which is not confined to that

continent alone". In the final analysis,

the major opposition occurs on the

plane of matrimonial strategy,

between endogamy and exogamy, in-

marriage on the Muslim side, out-

marriage on the Christian.

But there hasn't always been an

Islam or a Christendom, so at this point

Goody becomes a historian, remarking

that at one time the differences he has

observed did not exist. The change

came with Christianization. More

exactly, it began in the fourth century,

at the time when a sect was

transformed into a Church, into an

organization whose interests required

that it constitute and defend a

patrimony. The Church then

constructed a system of rules which—

without disturbing the rest, and

notably the terminology of kinship—

condemned existing procedures (since

in the human species 20 per cent of

couples have no children and 20 per

cent give birth only to girls) in order to

ensure, in spite of everything, the

hereditary transmission in the male

line of family goods. The practices

prescribed were adoption, polygyny,

divorce, concubinage and endogamy.

Professor Goody sets out from the

relations on Mualim Spatz of a

As opposed to the indigenous customs,

this system in no way derived from

Roman law, nor from the Old or New

Testaments. Like all sects, the

Christians had begun by destroying

family ties, detaching individuals from

their kinsfolk so that they could merge

into the new community: "the despair

of parents is the joy of the revolution".

Established as a Church in "the

routinisation of charisma," the

sect put the accent on family stability,

but within a new framework which

safeguarded the individual's liberty to

dispose of his goods, thus favouring

the mobility of land and its alienation, and

hence its devolution on the Church and

the accumulation of capital in the

Church's hands. It set out in particular

to confer on priests control over

strategies of heirship and in particular

the control over close marriages".

Marriage by mutual consent, and

freedom of testation "are surely

intrinsic to the whole process whereby

the Church established its position as a

power in the land, a spiritual power

certainly, but also a worldly one, the

owner of property, the largest

landowner, a position it obtained by

gaining control over the system of

marriage, gift and inheritance". The

strengthening of the conjugal unit "was

associated with the emergence of the

new Christian sect and with the

subsequent transformation of this body

into a Church by means of a vast

accumulation of property alienated

from the hands of kinsfolk".

As a good historian should be,

Goody is concerned with chronology.

He has tried hard to date the crucial

moments of the evolution he traces

accurately. After the initial period of

the fourth century, he rightly lays stress

on the age of the so-called Gregorian

reform, the eleventh and twelfth

centuries, when the power of the

Roman ecclesiastical organization

reached its height and which was, as I

see it, decisive; it was then that

prescriptions concerning sexuality and

the family achieved their greatest

rigour, that the ban on incest was

extended exaggeratedly to the seventh

degree of canonical kinship, and that

celibacy was imposed on all servants of

God; but also when marriage was

henceforth numbered among the seven

sacraments and a model of conjugality

laid down whose increasingly rapid

disintegration we have recently been

witnessing. Goody also gives dates to

the fluctuations in resistance to clerical

injunctions, marking the gap between

theory and practice, and the place

which was eventually allowed to that

singular, perhaps unique characteristic

of the European system: the transfer of

the vocabulary and practice of kinship

into the religious sphere, and the role

attributed especially to godparenthood,

whose importance, it seems, answered

to popular aspirations.

Goody has not ventured unarmed on

to the terrain of the historians. He has

read all that he should have read, or

almost. One may feel some surprise

that he has not paid greater attention to

the work of linguists, to Emile

Benveniste or Georges Dumézil, whose

recent researches into "Indo-

European marriage" deserve to be

considered here. One may feel too that

Goody would have done better to rely

on certain essential works—Suzanne

Wemple's recent book on marriage in

Frankish society, or Paul Veyne's

studies of sexuality in Ancient Rome—

rather than on the fantasies of René

Nelli, who confuses the troubadours'

"assag", which most likely never

existed except in the poetic daydreams

and minds of Occitanian fanatics, with

the generalized practice of *coltus**interruptus*.

But we must admire the shrewdness

with which the author of this brilliant

essay has done his research. He teaches

professional historians a splendid

lesson in rigour. By applying to the

materials they are accustomed to

handling a much more finely honed

conceptual tool, he shows the

advocates of a historical anthropology

how to escape from the routine

methods of traditional history. And

one must welcome also the honesty

which leads him, on page 215, to make

at least to go some of the way to

meeting those who will be tempted to

criticize him for the insistence with which

he explains in terms of "interests" the

path that he sees the Church as having

followed when it laid down the law in

matters of conjugal and sexual

morality. They may regret that Goody

should have thus subordinated ethical

preoccupations to "interests" and went

to tax him with materialism.

Indeed, this book will sit quite a few

teeth on edge. It is true that the gap was

wide between the precepts of the

Church authorities in these matters

and those of the Scriptures, and that

those who brought about the reform of

the eleventh century did not manage to

find any justification for the concept of

incest, whose rigours they strove with

might and main to have respected, in

Reasoning with the unreasonable

Alan Ryan

JON ELSTER

Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality
177pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 25230 X

It is a moot point whether social scientists are right to spend much time on the topic of rationality. Attempts to show that reason indicates the ends of life as well as the means to those ends have been notably unsuccessful, and most social scientists take it for granted that rationalism is not a live option in ethics. Used as they are to Weber's distinction between *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität*, they have come to think that no action can be condemned as irrational, so long as it either "expresses" some value or is believed by the agent to be a means to some end he has in mind.

But it is not a unanimous view that sociologists might well be interested in the causation of beliefs and desires but not in their rationality. However abstruse with praise and blame they seek to be, they encounter too many fellow sociologists who are not. When Pareto called action based on false belief "non-logical", he seemed to most of his successors to be setting too high a standard for "logical" action – the man who believes what is in fact false, but only after the most careful scrutiny of the evidence available to him, is not a paradigm of irrationality.

All Marxists and critics of Marxism are embroiled in much the same argument. The Marxist theory of ideology – or perhaps one should say some of the Marxian theories of ideology – explains the workings of capitalism by appealing to the functions served by irrational beliefs and irrational desires. Workers falsely believe that capitalists "deserve" their high wages, and capitalists falsely believe that workers are not rational enough to demand a managerial wage. More elaborately,

they and their employers have in the past subscribed to Calvinist or Methodist ideologies which have defused revolutionary vigour, have hidden from the capitalists the exploitative nature of their undertakings, and have thus legitimated the capitalist mode of production. The "irrationality" of these beliefs, and of the aspirations to salvation which go with them, is precisely what makes them interesting to the Marxist – the fact that the capitalist economic system could not continue if all the participants were rational, simultaneously explains why people have irrational beliefs and desires, and condemns capitalism as irrational too.

The Marxist theory of ideology is one of Jon Elster's stalking-horses in the latest instalment of his wrestling match with irrationality. In anyone less coolly intelligent than Elster, his passion for the analysis of social rationality and irrationality – in *Logic and Society*, *Ulysses and the Sirens* and here in *Sour Grapes* – might be thought to be obsessive. But Elster's intellectual interests are so wide-ranging that the last thing one could complain of is a narrow and blinkered concentration on one topic. In *Sour Grapes*, as in his earlier books, he calls upon the resources of philosophy, game theory, history, social psychology, and literary criticism, to illuminate such topics as why really good writers cannot write mediocre best-sellers, what the difference is between "character planning" and mere "sour grapes", why some political theories are self-defeating, and, his major interest I suspect, why any serious Marxist theory has to subscribe to "methodological individualism".

Although Elster is extremely tidy-minded, *Sour Grapes* is not a tidy book. It divides into four sections, the first a general discussion of the criteria for rationality which owes a good deal to Donald Davidson; the second and longest a discussion of mental and social states which are essentially by-products and which cannot be the objects of deliberate choice; the third, an account of the phenomenon which gives the book its title – "sour grapes", or, more technically, adaptive preference formation; and the last and briefest, a discussion of some of the shortcomings of the package of views which make up the Marxian theory of ideology.

It is not a complaint against Elster to say that there is no single argumentative thread which runs all the way through the book. For what he sees, as others have before him, is that there is less to be said about the positive requirements for rationality than about the various ways in which individuals and societies do not – and sometimes cannot – behave rationally.

If the book were more disconnected than in fact it is, it would still be an extremely good read – between the text and the footnotes, the reader gets something between a conversation at a briskly well-read dinner party and a seminar at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, and very invigorating it is.

Elster begins by offering a "thin" theory of rationality, and follows it up with a "broad" theory – a distinction and a strategy familiar to Rawls's readers. The thin theory requires only that our beliefs and desires should be consistent, and that our actions should be caused by our beliefs and desires in "the right way", as Davidson once put it. Thin though these requirements are, they are not easy to spell out in detail, and Elster has to leave some loose ends dangling about whether, for instance, rational behaviour demands that we select the best means to an end or merely an effective means to that end, and whether and where we can rely on there being unique solutions. But this still leaves us with a pretty thin theory: for it says nothing about the rationality of having the beliefs and desires in the first place. As Martin Hollis once remarked, a man who is trying to find a large piece of buttered toast to sit on is not usually thought to be rational if his action is "rationalized" by being shown to be consistent with his belief that he is a poached egg. The question then turns on what it is to have rational beliefs and desires.

In the case of beliefs, we are not in too much trouble: the thought that beliefs are rational when they are based on a sound judgment of the evidence seems to be true. This allows a belief to be true but irrational and false but rational, and leaves for further scrutiny only such questions as how much evidence a man ought to look at before forming his beliefs. Desires are trickier; Elster does not want to say that desires are rational only when they are moral – he flinches at the thought of a man of purely company with Kant, but he is surely quite right to do so; as he says "between the thin theory of the rational and the good there is room and need for a broad theory of the rational". The man who has wicked desires need not hold them heteronomously – they need not be compulsive, nor compensatory, and the Platonic picture of the wicked man as suffering from civil war in the soul is surely not an accurate portrait of all wicked men.

As this suggests, the obvious analogue to beliefs held on the basis of sound judgment is autonomous desires. This is why so much of Elster's book is devoted to "sour grapes"; the thought is that some ways of acquiring desires are autonomy-preserving or

autonomy-displaying, while others are not. But what they are is here left "as a residual" – autonomy-preserving ways of acquiring desires are those ways which are left after the heteronomous ways have been eliminated.

I am not sure that this is the best way to get a theory of autonomy going. It looks much too vulnerable to attrition – desires may arise in us in all sorts of ways, and it is hard to believe that one particular way is going to emerge as acceptable when all the unacceptable ways have gone; and, in any case, what Elster's long and engrossing account of "states that are essentially by-products" suggests is that desires which are highly valued when we have them may only be required by processes which aim overtly at something altogether else.

For instance, the desire to acquire myself bravely in battle may only arise as the by-product of childish games of derring-do; it's not a desire I could simply summon up from cold, nor is it a desire I could come to have when I saw the implications of my other desires – the wrong sort of desire for the process to explain it. It seems to me that one either has to say that it is neither an autonomous nor a non-autonomous desire, or do something rather different from Elster and say that autonomy is primarily a feature of persons rather than their desires, and that my desire to acquire myself bravely in battle is autonomous, not in virtue of how I acquired it, but in virtue of how I could treat it now.

If I could suppress acting on it for the sake of preserving the whole army, say, it would be an autonomous desire and thus far rational. The same thing holds for wicked desires: Plato's tyrant cannot control his cruelty and treachery; the autonomous tyrant can. None of this detracts from the interest of Elster's discussion of "by-products" and "sour grapes". These discussions are quite largely self-contained reflections on particular issues, and are full of uncommon-common sense. So, for instance, he suggests that "participatory" theories of democracy are self-defeating to the extent that they suppose that the overt end of politics can be the enhancement of the political virtue of the citizen; politics has to be about something else before there can be any point in participation. Mill's enthusiasm for participation looks perfectly sensible on this view, since Mill supposes that people will participate to protect their interests and inform their rulers of what they want, even though what the eventually values about the process is the type of character it produces. Hannah Arendt, on the other hand, who goes on at length about virtuosity and appearing in the public space, leaves it much less clear what the practical basis of politics is – especially

since she treats most practical matters with a curious snobbish contempt.

Again, Elster smartly demolishes all forms of social theory which treat problems as if they explain what the whole social system is organized to do. Leibniz and Malebranche are revealed as the two patron saints of what Elster dismisses as "the subconscious search for meaning" – more vulgarly known as "it's no accident that" school. Leibniz thought that everything was part of God's strategy for making the best of all possible worlds – so that deformed children are a way of teaching midwives the beauties of normality; Malebranche more mildly argued that they were the minimal price God had to pay for the quality of the whole system. On either view, meaning lay in their place in the whole order.

The modern version of Leibniz – or Leibniz inverted – appears in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, where he asks "what is served by the failure of the prison?" Having supposed that it must serve a purpose, he leads us (by the nose) to the supposition that "the prison, and so intended to eliminate offences, but rather to distinguish them, to distribute them, to use them; that it is not so much that they render docile those who are liable to transgress the law, but that they tend to assimilate the transgression of the laws in a general tactics of subjection." What a way with this it that it supposes that once we've asked "cui bono?" – whom does it suit for society to be like this? – we've explained why society is like this. And this commits the worst of all sins in the book: it takes the link with holy or miracle-working rabbis; its antinomian beliefs in the meaning of the "broken vessels"; and its hope that the cosmos could be restored to its original pure state, it had much in common with other revivalist-utopian movements. It was exceptional, however, in its emphasis on story-telling, which is deeply engrained in Jewish culture and

The retreat into simplicity

Gabriel Josipovici

YAFFA ELLACH (Editor)
Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust
266pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50.
0 19 303199 7

Between 1945 and 1951 roughly 92,000 survivors of Nazi Europe came to America; only Israel accepted more. Many of them settled in Brooklyn, and it is in large part their children who fill Yaffa Ellach's classes. The fact gave her the idea for this book, which is made up of interviews by herself and her students with their parents, and relatives and neighbours, about their memories of the Nazi years. The interviews were conducted in more than nine languages, then translated and put into readable prose by Ellach. Out of that she then undertook the task of checking as many of the facts as she could against already published accounts, using these to clarify the stories, but also using the stories to throw light on some of the puzzles that still baffle historians. The book is thus not only an anthology of almost a hundred stories but also a serious contribution to the history of the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

But why Hasidic? The Hasidic movement arose in the early eighteenth century in Eastern Europe as a response to the Cossack massacres, the dislocation with the Measiah, Sabbatai Zvi, and the decline of Jewish institutions. With its focus on joy, inner peace, dance, song, Elster's eyes, which is to assume a causal process without taking any trouble to suggest what causal mechanism is at work to produce it.

The same argument disposes of the parts of the Marxist theory of ideology. But readers who want to see a really meticulous demonstration of the claim that Marxism must, to be credible, produce an account of the causal mechanisms which ensure that people will believe what's good for them, will enjoy Elster's demonstration that beliefs shaped by people's situations do not necessarily serve their interests – or their rulers' interests, that beliefs shaped by interests do not necessarily serve the interests that shape them either – from all of which, and awkwardly for Marxism, it follows that the fact that beliefs do serve certain interests does nothing to explain people's holding those beliefs. The seminar is an open-ended one, and it will be interesting to see whether anyone manages much of a reply to this; but one thing which we can all be grateful for is the way Jon Elster raises the level of all the arguments he is involved in.

was bound up here with the need to give testimony to the sayings and deeds of the holy rabbis.

There have been no new Hasidic stories for over a century, though both Buber and Kafka were drawn to the genre – but they, of course, were outsiders. In Brooklyn today, on the other hand, is to be found the largest Hasidic community in the world. What Ellach is offering seems therefore to be two books for the price of one. If mad Ireland hurt Yenta into poetry then, she suggests, the horrors of the Nazi years forced the Hasidim into reviving an art form that had been lost for generations. Her pages invite us to witness a double miracle: the survival of human beings under unspeakable conditions, and the resurrection of a lost genre.

The reality, unfortunately, is rather different. The book left me profoundly uneasy, and the uneasiness is not helped by the fact that its source is hard to locate. These are painful matters, but since one can offend by too indiscriminating a sympathy as well as by insensitivity to suffering, it is necessary to try.

One of the first things that strikes the reader of this collection is the utter chaos of war. Chaos as the hunted Jews sought to escape into the snowy forests of Poland, where survival depended on a moment of luck or the chance meeting with one of those rare peasants who wished Jews well rather than ill; and chaos in the supposedly well-organized camps. Naturally enough, in such conditions the primary emotions of the victims are fear and the desperate desire to escape, to survive at any cost. This is perfectly understandable. Nevertheless I was surprised at the stress in so many of these tales on the way individuals escaped and on the concealment of their Jewish identity and their use of forged papers. When this is combined with an overt belief in the magic power of certain objects the result is actually a little sickening. In one tale, for example, a Hasidic rabbi is saved because he is wearing a garment which

he inherited directly from the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the movement. Dragged out with the other inmates of the Janowska Road Camp and shot down arbitrarily with them, he is found to be still alive when other Jews are made to bury the bodies. He is smuggled to safety, still wearing his garment, a doctor is found to be the rabbi the only victim, the fact that God, through the precious cloak, had watched over him, would be mysterious and moving. But when "saved" means that his life has been spared but that thousands of his fellow-Jews have perished, the word takes on different connotations. What kind of God is this who saves those with magic cloaks and not others? What kind of faith is this that rejoices in personal safety and spurs no thought for those who did not get up?

The most nauseating of these stories are those which have to do with pre-war friendships between the victims and their persecutors. The Rabbi of Bluzhov dares to go to the Gestapo Passport Division as a last desperate bid for freedom. Only one in ten of those who try their luck in this way survive. But the SS Officer in charge recognizes him, and his attitude changes completely:

"Don't worry, my friend, don't worry, my friend, just don't worry." Müller got up from the chair, looked the door, sat next to the rabbi and he too began to cry. "Don't worry," he comforted the rabbi. "As long as I am alive nothing will happen to you in this town. . . You need a nice, comfortable apartment." Müller said, after validating the papers. . . "Just a place to live in. The sector for foreign nationals would be perfect", the rabbi replied.

This story is entitled "For the Sake of Friendship". Equally ugly is the encounter between the Hasid and the Camp Commandant who is about to send him to his death during a selection. The rabbi addresses him, the officer recognizes him, and spares his life. The moral, which the rabbi

repeats in the interview, years later, is: "This is the power of a 'good morning' greeting. A man must always greet his fellow man." It is the smugness with which this pious message is put across that is appalling.

Indeed, in only one of the stories does any kind of real heroism, of awareness of the community, shine through. The foreman of a brigade, a certain Schneeweiss, is in charge of a group of Jews who decide to fast on Yom Kippur. The SS officer orders them to eat, then tells Schneeweiss that if they don't he himself will be shot. Instead of turning on the others, as might have been expected, he "pulled himself to attention, looked the German directly in the eyes, and said in a very quiet tone: 'We Jews do not eat today. Today is Yom Kippur, our most holy day, the Day of Atonement.'"

Even when the officer holds the gun to his temple and pulls the trigger he does not budge. Though this story is unique there are a few others which do not conform to the prevailing pattern. Stories where brothers are quick-witted enough to save brothers, where a little boy is saved by an old man in a queue whom he never sees again and comes to imagine must have been the Prophet Elijah. But the final impression is one of distaste. And it is not just the nature of most of the tales that is responsible for this. The style too is embarrassingly inept. It must have been an enormous task to transcribe oral accounts in more than nine languages and turn them into tales, in English. Still, someone who persists in using the word "ongoing" or comments that "The trail from Mauthausen to Monsey was blazed by burning faith" is hardly likely to make a success of it.

And there is a final problem. I suspect that, despite Ellach's claims, the Hasidic tale is precisely *not* the way to deal with the events of the Nazi years. Oral story-telling is the community's way of making sense of its world; when the community breaks down, tales give way to novels and short poems. In an age which is no

longer communal tales become, not natural, but naive. That is, they feed an imagination which does not want to cope with doubt and complexity. This is not to say that there is an absolute distinction between novels and tales. Novels and poems too can tend towards the simplicities of tales, and the horrors of the Nazi atrocities are so great that we instinctively tend to retreat into the comforting simplicities of folk-tale and myth when we are faced with them. Sylvia Plath's poems and D. M. Thomas's *White Hotel* are such retreats. As Leon Wieseltier said in the *New York Review of Books*: "They [the followers of Plath] exploit the imagery of the Holocaust with no appreciable talent and in the service of a *l'âme de mourir* not very different in kind from that loathing of life which fills so much current pornography with Nazi paraphernalia and practices."

Adorno was of course creating his own poor myth when he said these things couldn't be written about. But to write truthfully about them you must show some understanding of what can never, in the nature of things, be said, as well as what it is possible to say. Amir Gilboa, Primo Levi and Aharon Appelfeld have all shown how this can be done. Ellach and her sources are of course doing something very different from Plath and Thomas. They certainly cannot be accused of turning history into private myth. But the Hasidic stress on magic and the insensitive use of language combine with the form of the tale to produce something which insults those who suffered and died by imposing on events a kind of easy spirituality. The result is a strangely repellent book, in spite of the good will and hard work which evidently went into its making.

The *International Bibliography of Jewish Affairs* (402pp. Chicago: Westview Press. £31.75. 0 86531 164 1) is edited by Elizabeth E. Eppler. It covers non-fiction books and articles "published in the Diaspora" during the years 1976-77. An index of names and a list of periodicals are provided at the back.

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Breaking with the Greeks

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JOHN MARENBO

Early Medieval Philosophy (480. 1150) An Introduction
Oxford: Clarendon and Kegan Paul
£2.95. 0 190 3403 1

Early Christian thought owed a great deal to the influence of philosophers, the borrowing of terms and framing of formulas on philosophical models went on beyond the end of the Patristic period, as did the process of anxious reviewing of what exactly the philosophers had said, which helped to give a tradition and edge to the differences between Christian and philosophical thinking. *Early Medieval Philosophy* approaches this story from the philosophical, not the theological end, and throws new light on its unfolding.

John Marenbon begins by surveying Platonism and its history up to the point where its effects can be felt in the writings of both Greek and Latin Fathers. Then he looks at Aristotle's

logic, and Boethius' rendering of the more elementary part of it which provided early medieval scholars with almost their only logic textbooks before the twelfth century. Pressure of space confines Dr Marenbon here, but he puts his finger on the essentials. More might have been said about Aristotle's use of the Cappadocian Fathers and the way in which he seemed to Aquinas who heard him preach on the Hexameron in Milan, to have applied philosophy to Genesis in a new and convincing way. Ambrose stands at a turning-point between the Latin dependence on the Greek Fathers, and that willingness to take off on their own which the Latins began to display at least with Augustine. With this change came the movement of the philosophical tradition from East to West, and from Greek to Latin, which began the development of the Western philosophical tradition with which Marenbon is concerned.

With the period he covers next, Marenbon is on home ground. The understanding of the manuscript tradition, and of the areas of interest of Carolingian thinkers, which he owed to his recent *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre* (1981) makes this both the most original and the most important section of the book. This

period has suffered both neglect and misunderstanding and Marenbon has done a good deal to rescue its thinkers from obscurity and to demonstrate the merits of their work. He is particularly sensitive to the difficulties of disentangling true philosophy from philosophical theology, and he accords logic its significant place among their concerns. He gives John Scotus Erigena's Greek scholarship its due, and shows how, here and there, the Latin and Greek traditions met up again in the centuries before the arrival of Aristotle's philosophical works in the West in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

It is always difficult to know where to put Aristotle's history of this kind. He is so conspicuously a rarity among philosophers, and so finely-balanced, that he lies between the post-Carolingian and the upsurge of the twelfth century, that he fits awkwardly into any chronologically arranged account. Marenbon has placed him with the Carolingians, and treats him in part as a logician, which is no doubt right: in a history of philosophy, one general criticism might be entered here: Erigena, to a lesser extent, and Anselm, and Peter Abelard in yet another way, are so exceptional that it would be good to see them lifted out of

the crowd and brought a little more fully to life as individuals. But the limitations of space have been a drawback.

The final section treats the period 1100-50, when a great deal more in the way of philosophizing and speculation than theology proved to be possible than had hitherto been achieved with the old materials. This period of creative experiment is a particularly attractive one, and Marenbon shows it at its best. He gives a clear analysis of some of the problems which were investigated and the solutions proposed by the leading thinkers of the day, and again shows how important the study of logic (and the new approach to grammar which went with it) proved in epistemology and in philosophy of language.

The book lacks a conclusion, which is a pity, because Dr Marenbon is at his best in his incisive introductory general implications of the detailed changes and endeavours he catalogues. But it provides, taken as a whole, an excellent guide to the philosophy of the early Middle Ages; it places the individual thinkers accurately and clearly, and that is no mean feat in such a brief survey.

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Oxford University Press will be exhibiting these and many more books at Stand M901, Hall 5, and Autumn visitors are welcome.

Backward-looking pragmatists

Andrew Saint

DONATELLA CALABI (Editor)

Architettura domestica in Gran Bretagna 1890-1939.

241pp, with 347 black-and-white illustrations. Milan: Electa. L30,000.

For scope, seriousness and concentration, there is nothing to beat the modern architectural history currently coming out of northern Italy. English-speaking scholarship has been as prolific as ever lately on twentieth-century architecture and its problems. But rarely do its architects, planners and historians co-operate to investigate events as broadly and deeply as Manfredo Tafuri and his

colleagues at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia. Donatella Calabi's book is the third in a series of composite efforts, all emanating from Venice and published by Electa, aimed at piecing together the history and architecture of housing in various European countries from the turn of the century up to the Second World War. Sets of *saggi* on Vienna, Holland and now England have already been published. If the standard of these books can be maintained, the all-important volume on Germany will be something to look forward to.

The first thing to say about Calabi's book is that it deserves a prompt English edition, if not in its present form then in some suitably revised one. Narrowly speaking, most of the matter in *Architettura domestica* has been previously discussed or illustrated somewhere. There are exceptions; some of Calabi's own research on the 1930s in particular is certainly original. But these are really tokens of the peritaphic and care with which the authors have hewn their way through the jungle of British housing sources. The real value of the book is different. Most simply, perhaps, no available book in English provides the breadth and clarity of information and illustration for housing of the period 1890-1939. Apart from the five solid essays which make up the meat of the book, the excellent standard and format of the series allow a broad range of British housing to be shown, with plenty of clear, unbacked pictures and a dense, informative and generally accurate set of notes accompanying each project. As an aid to instruction, these could hardly be bettered.

Over and above these virtues, the essays themselves offer much for the insular British historian to think about. Not that they are free from fault or problems: slanted as they are towards an Italian audience, their respectful but remote curiosity about the bizarre values of *il mondo anglo-sassone* and their adherence to the frequently tedious rhetoric of Italian academic prose are obvious. But the book's translation without revision. That said, the contributors' international perspective makes them ask the simple, vital questions which English commentators are apt to avoid or forget. In particular, they want to know how and why the kind of housing which architects and planners wanted to see built differed from what was actually erected. Though few satisfying answers are given, ideas abound and are rarely swallowed up in the beavens of a sea of housing facts and statistics.

Thus Guido Zucconi, writing on the planning of public housing before the First World War, asks directly: how can the "free" house-owners and style for which British architects were

renowned in the 1890s be reconciled with the standardization which had taken hold of public housing by 1914? In other words, he tries to establish how far the architectural "researches on space" going on at the turn of the century were connected with or disconnected from the planning of post-war "Addison Act" housing. Hampstead Garden Suburb, he concludes, was the unique meeting-point between the experimenters and the standardizers; thereafter, the English contribution to housing-form suffered from the so-called Edwardian "failure of architectural nerve" long ago diagnosed by Pevsner. This is a fertile if not necessarily accurate view of the problem. In fact, much pragmatic reform in cottage-building had been undertaken by municipalities, philanthropic companies and even country squires before Parker and Unwin began their work and the *Daily Mail* promoted its famous cottage competitions. The houses of the Addison Act continued this "sanitary" tradition and owed few of their arrangements to the bold inventiveness of the Arts and Crafts era. Nevertheless, we still need to understand why this should have been, and Zucconi is right to address the question. To answer it properly, one would need to be more aware than the authors of the book's earlier essays appear to be of the grey but architecturally and socially significant dividing line between "houses" and "housing".

The other outstanding essay, Antonio Manno's on the town planning of housing estates between the wars, follows a similar pattern to Zucconi's. He reminds us that the schemes of the garden-city enthusiasts were generally too costly to affect the day-to-day public housing of the municipalities very much. Therefore Welwyn and the other garden-city efforts of the time were not public initiatives at all, and larger-scale developments like Manchester's Wythamshale and London's Becontree were largely financed by local industry or services facilities. Manno points to the middle way between urban density and garden-city ruralism, as proposed by Stanley Adams, as the best intermediate source of new ideas for housing development - *nuovi modelli insediativi*. Again this is an oversimplification, but not an unfruitful one. As Adams never got quite the chances which Unwin enjoyed, so that Manno has to illustrate his early and quite small Duchy of Cornwall estate at Kennington as the best representation of this thinking. Because of what was published at the time, London and more particularly the London County Council's estates tend to dominate Manno's arguments (as also those of

other contributors), whereas perhaps some of the housing of Liverpool, where Adams taught for many years, is better testimony to his mature ideas.

Of the other three essays, one is by an Englishman, Gordon Cherry, and merely seeks to give an efficient digest of housing information for the period covered in the book. Another, by Alessandra Ponte, attempts ambitiously in brief compass to introduce an Italian readership to the late-Victorian ideology of the home. It supposedly concentrates on the thinking of Patrick Geddes, touches fleetingly on Social Darwinism, Ruskinism, Taylorism and feminism, but though never unintelligent is uneven and undisciplined.

The final essay, by the editor, is a different kettle of fish. Though written in an atavistic style which makes comprehension hard, it genuinely advances knowledge of housing in the 1930s, on which surprisingly little thorough work has yet been done. Public housing in those years shifted predominantly back from the suburbs to the inner city, and English *affollamento* of the Modern Movement affirmed a commitment to a socialized architecture. How were these tendencies connected, very rarely. Physically speaking, asks Calabi? Quarry Hill at Leeds, Brinlin's closest parallel to the housing estates of Vienna, is the only whole-hearted example, and that in the long term turned out a structural disaster - perhaps the first major *débâcle* of "systems-building" in this country. With Vienna and Berlin at the back of her mind, Calabi is clearly baffled by the continuing insularity of so much British housing in the 1930s. From the European perspective, the cautious and enduring British view that modernism is right for factories but wrong for homes seems eccentric. But she is far from dismissing the housing

achievement of the period as merely backward-looking. It was during the 1930s, she argues, that a scientific approach towards housing problems prevailed over the previous range of sanitary, social and political attitudes. Deterioration of stock took over from control of behaviour as the main motive for building; manuals were drawn up, standards set, and for the first time serious "research" much of it explicitly international in scope, was devoted to housing problems. Thus the 1930s paved the way for the radically different housing to be built, for better and worse, after the war.

How then do the Italians assess the achievement of British housing over the first fifty years of full public expenditure? They are impressed, plainly, by Britain's commitment (mostly in advance of other countries) to social housing, and by the generous space standards, the elegant layouts and the concessions to privacy achieved by architects and planners against the economic odds. But they are also puzzled by the urbanism and anti-modernism which persist throughout the period, and by the primitive attitude taken to security outside the home itself. They sum up the British architectural ideology of the home in an ironic German phrase: *Alte Sachlichkeit*, perhaps translatable as "backward-looking pragmatism". By way of contrast to *Nuove Sachlichkeit*, the so-called "new objectivity" or "new rationalism" which triumphed in German housing of the 1920s. To judge from the housing schemes built in the last few years, we are back now with *Alte Sachlichkeit*, today after our own period of experiment in the 1960s. Whether the second fifty years of British public housing will deserve intellectual study remains to be seen, but the same untold quirks and contrasts will certainly be found to persist.

decoration of the Palace and the Herculean and Apollonian splendour. Hersey illuminates the whole character of Baroque allegory, although he is led, by enlisting Vico (and others), to give almost as much weight to the later rooms as to those of Vanvitelli.

Of the architecture itself less is to be learnt from the book. The "number" of the title refers to the reduction of the plan to a grid system, a phenomenon discussed in some historical detail, but not. It would appear, especially relevant to Vanvitelli. Although the design is compared with de Certeau's *Buen Retiro*, the opportunity to consider palace design as an international phenomenon north and south of the Alps is not seized upon with anything like the minutiae of allegorical decoration. The author's method of times leads him towards fantasy: "The halberds and bodyguards of the king's court, the palatine brigades hold aloft the palace canopy for similarly colourful brigades of human guards, servants and courtiers." On the other hand the minutiae of the upper vestibule, one of the most unusual and conspicuous features of the design, is mentioned only in passing as "vaults lifted into white-crowns".

In reflexive mood

Reference Cave

FRANÇOIS RIGOLO

La Tête de la Renaissance: Des Montaignes à Montaigne. Geneva: Droz.

holding the balance between historical evidence and the methods of modern poetics is a tricky business. On the one hand there is the risk that empirically verifiable data (textual variants, for example) will appear to be only a pretext for an elaborate game in which "meaning" shimmers like a mirage; on the other, there is the lapse of evidence that occurs when a precise degree of formal relations admits dependence on the refractory world of the *hors-texte*. François Rigolot, who has written these risks more consistently and intelligently than most students of French Renaissance literature, compares the title of his new book to *la Renaissance* in a historical concept, even if - especially if - one calls into question its validity as such.

One might add that the sub-title, *La Tête de la Renaissance*, is an implied metaphor of a literary, sounds exactly like the subtitle of innumerable literary histories. Yet to confirm the illusion, the first chapter begins with the phrase "La Renaissance de la transition..." and with a survey of fifteenth-century didactic poems and compilations, each preceded by "Transition". It is soon followed by "Transition", a metaphor of a book (and of writing), in the margin, and the book itself will also be the *transit* motif of the chapter on *Montaigne*. The transitions in Rigolot's own text are in fact primarily *linguistic*, off-centre, metonymic, despite the chronological arrangement: *Le Texte de la Renaissance* is composed of a series of studies written over a number of years and known together by recurrent preoccupations rather than by an overall historical or even theoretical argument ("ces études, loin de former un tout, travaillent au trou de leur étrangeté").

The range of materials is wide enough to include early sixteenth-century rebus and acrostic poems, Jean de La Fontaine's brilliant parody *Les Epîtres de l'Amant Vain*, parenthetical, *littéraire* and *numérologique* patterns of letters in the fixed form of the *divan*, the metaphors and myths of Ronsard and Du Bellay, and the successive additions to Montaigne's *Essais*. Historically, the centre of gravity is shifted in the earlier part of the period, and it is here too that the various essays are most visibly linked. The first part of the section on Rabelais echoes (sometimes word for word) the preceding discussion of *Montaigne* in order to bring out the intertextual relations: between Rabelais and the vernacular literature of the time, and between the two authors, which brings one back to the

dated to the way in which Rabelais "defamiliarizes" or "remotivates" conventions and *topoi* which in *rhétoriqueur* writing may have a more plainly didactic function. Subsequently, the theme of implied intentionality, which is central to Rigolot's analysis of Jean Lemaire, reappears in a discussion of Montaigne and implied reader in Rabelais. And in a further chapter, the contention that the dialogue between Alcofraybas Nasier and Panurge in *Pantagruel* XVII is a parodic inversion of *Purgatorio* XVII turns out to depend for its plausibility on the prior elucidation of the ways in which the second *Épître de l'Amant Vain* echoes and displaces its prestigious epic forebears.

These last two topics converge. Rigolot is above all concerned with the structural location or dislocation of the narrative voice, with moments at which, in particular, tensions become apparent between more than one frame of reference. In Jean Lemaire, the coherence of the fiction is disrupted by the emergence of a poetic persona subject to the constraints of patronage; in Rabelais, the narrator who parodies both himself and his reader abandons his game in order to allow the reader to construct an extra-textual (satirical) dimension. Similarly, the complex manoeuvres of Montaigne's self-apology are shown to break out with particular clarity at certain characteristically off-centre points.

Although the question of the poetic persona reappears in the essays on Ronsard and Du Bellay, this section of the book is not quite so firmly connected to the others by its themes and method. It includes a brief but elegant study of metaphor and metamorphosis in Ronsard's *Amours* and on account of recurrent imagery and rhetorical forms in the poetry of Du Bellay. The role of the first person singular comes to the surface again here, but the emphasis is thematic rather than formal, with the result that Rigolot seems only to retrace in slightly more sophisticated terms the traditional image of Du Bellay as a perpetual exile and underdog; "expression personnelle" is still the key-note, even if the expression is detected at the level of obsessive myths and figures.

In general, though, the methods and approaches adopted in this book are not only compatible but also mutually reinforcing. Like most of the variants of modern poetics, their common horizon is reflexivity: all of the individual analyses conjuncture structural features with thematic ones (often taken figuratively) in order to arrive at the notion of a text that comments on itself. The common focus, correspondingly, is the *précis* sense in which this metalanguage, rather than being a predicate of the critic's method, can be said to be "already there", inscribed in the text as an implied or covert intentionality: "Lo chance de la dédicatoire, si elle ne refuse pas de s'inscrire à l'histoire, est peut-être de saisir les textes en flagrant délit d'intentionnalité."

Which brings one back to the

question of history. Rigolot cites various criteria in defence of readings which he knows will upset the historically minded: coherence and "perceptibility" (Riffaterre's term) are the principal ones, to which one might add symmetry - the structural patterns he uncovers are often tripartite grouped round a centre (or an off-centre). But in the end, his hypotheses have to comply with and draw on historical materials if he is to avoid being caught "en flagrant délit d'anachronisme". The marshalling of titles and dates in the opening chapter, the insistence on textual variants, and perhaps above all the appeal, here and there, to the allegorical imagination of the sixteenth century as a justification for his own "allegorical" readings, are designed to lend *raisonnable* to manoeuvres inspired by Gérard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov. History itself may only be a text, may only be *raisonnable*, as Rigolot points out; but it is a powerful ally and a formidable enemy.

Although the problem is perceptible on almost every page of the book, I would have preferred to see it given a little more scope in the "Après-propos", where it is tackled directly but in rather fragmentary form. In particular, I think it would have been helpful to develop the thesis that the literary and quasi-literary writing of the Renaissance is intrinsically unstable and "plural" in character by referring to recent work on the humanist practices of commentary, compilation, quotation, citation and allusion. Rigolot refers to the opposition between *texte* and *glose* but not to the ways in which new texts may emerge from (and as) commentary on the old texts, carrying with them the idiosyncrasies of digression, fragmentation and apology which they derive from that origin and which make them labile and many-layered.

He might well have used the opportunity, too, to clear up a fundamental misunderstanding which has set "traditionalists" and *nouveaux critiques* against one another, often needlessly. When one speaks of a text as "plural" one does not mean that it can mean anything. A plural text is one which gives rise to a range - possibly an indefinite range - of meanings, but in quite precise ways. It cannot be reduced to a single structure of thought or mode of argument; it may also be set askew in its themes and organization by the tension between declared intentions and more or less undeclared ones. To analyse these various levels, without supposing that any one of them yields the "correct" meaning, is to avoid the literalist view according to which, for example, Montaigne can't be terribly interested in reading if the word *lecture* clocks up a low frequency in a concordance of the *Essais*.

The enterprise, as I said at the outset, is risky. But whether or not Rigolot always succeeds in maintaining *raisonnable* (his readers will certainly differ in their view of this), he knows what the risks are and he takes them in this book with admirable tact and ingenuity.

In biblical vein

Anthony Levi

J. S. STREET

French Sacred Drama from Bèze to Corneille: Dramatic forms and their purposes in the early modern theatre. 344pp. Cambridge University Press. £32.50. 0 521 24537 0

J. S. Street has written an undisciplined but very good thesis. He has chosen the time-honoured method of cutting a swathe through an enormous field and analysing not "French Sacred Drama", as the title proclaims, but drama written in French on sacred subjects, as it might have been on Latin, Greek, Oriental or pastoral ones, between about 1550 and about 1650. For the most part, neo-Latin drama, translations and all but strict adaptations of sacred subjects are excluded, so that Dr Street loses sight of tragedy as a rhetorical tool to teach schoolboys how to edify an audience and move its passions according to the norms of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

Almost none of Street's plays are sacred in the sense of being part of a sacred or semi-sacred ritual, like some medieval depictions of the Passion or modern Nativity plays, but there are a hundred or so of them, classified in a way which is vulnerable because not strictly chronological. No doubt hoping to find conclusions valid for the development of all French drama during so important a period, he has analysed them, commented on their form and content, produced bibliographical descriptions of all editions of them between 1550 and 1650, and provided a list of dates of publication and performance, a good bibliography and an index.

Despite the limitation of the original subject, the results of this study are helpful. The section Street cuts, in uneven terrain, reveals at least some of the contours, which may well become the starting point for a scholarly history of the origins of French drama. It would be possible to quibble at a classification here and an analysis there; the plays are grouped into categories which are over-rigid, occasionally overlap, and should have been more strictly chronological. But even if the development of dramatic form does not emerge as clearly as one could wish, this book certainly opens our eyes to formal distinctions which have hitherto gone unregarded.

After a brief introduction on the *mythologie* after 1548, when they were banned (quite effectively in the Paris area), Street moves on to the more psychologically orientated treatment by Bèze of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. Too much is made of the failure of pre-Brechtian critics to understand that not all drama everywhere depended on the audience's identification with one or more central characters and therefore on a mode of representation more naturalistic than stylized, and the statement that the "neo-Latin theatre

... had little direct impact on the French tradition" is altogether too direct. There is an unnecessary and sometimes arbitrary severity in Street's dismissal of earlier critics, and he ignores the reasons for which critical attitudes have evolved so speedily in this fast-moving field, though he rightly singles out certain modern works, like Richard Griffiths's book on Montchrestien, for special approbation.

After the treatment of Bèze comes that of the plays written as expositions of the main Christian doctrines, the Fall, the Incarnation, the Redemption and so on. Street notes that during the Wars of Religion the Protestants, with their characteristic preference for Old Testament subjects, made much more use of drama for propaganda purposes than did the Catholics, without quite seeing why, or resolving the anomaly created by Protestant disapproval of the stage, which must partly account for a distinct shortage of dramatic masterpieces among Street's chosen sacred plays. When D'Aubigné wanted to invoke the tragic muse, it was in order to write his near-epic poem *Les Tragiques*. Although aware of the political overtones built into the treatment of sacred subjects by dramatists as late as Corneille, Street does not emphasize this side of his subject, and his preoccupation with what he sometimes bewilderingly calls the "classical tradition" leads him to concentrate on tragedies rather than the *tragico-comédie* so typical of much of the later part of his period.

This is a book that must be consulted by anyone concerned with French drama between 1550 and 1650, and read by anyone working seriously in the field. It is apt to be one-sided by virtue of its subject, but is especially strong on "humanist drama" (de la Taille and Garnier), although the definition of the essence of this as lying in the fact that "action and character were firmly conceived as exemplary" is inadequate, and certainly does not delimit the category as something distinct. Related subsequent forms are said to have "inclined to serious reflection on moral and philosophical questions". As might be expected, the material becomes thin after the Wars of Religion; until we come to Molière and Corneille, in the fourth decade of the new century.

In the end, however conscientious and often illuminating Street's analyses, his necessary imposition of strict limits and categories results in something less than might have been hoped for. No real explanation is given why there was a decline in "French sacred drama" from soon after 1600 to soon after 1650. Yet evidence could have been drawn from the specialized works available on the lyric, the novel, and the spiritual treatises of the period. That, however, would come near to being the definitive work of which Street's thesis could be a cornerstone. Like most theses, this one has implications and conclusions which will grow and mature in the author's mind, no doubt, but which are not here fully developed.

Building figuratively

Allan Braham

GEORGE L. HERSEY
Architecture, Poetry and Number in the Royal Palace at Caserta.
318pp. University of Chicago Press. £33.75.

With so little written in English on the architecture of the eighteenth century, George L. Hersey's monograph on the palace of Caserta is a most welcome volume. An attractively presented book in oblong format, though with unjustified columns of text, it focuses on one of the major achievements of the period: a building that is not, however, without some of the vacuity endemic to royal palace design. Beyond this, *Architecture, Poetry and Number in the Royal Palace at Caserta* is remarkable for its originality of approach, that has far-reaching (if controversial) implications.

The largest Italian palace of its age, Caserta was designed by Luigi Vanvitelli for Charles of Bourbon, the son of King Philip V of Spain by his second wife, Elisabetha Farnese. Charles had been crowned King of the Two Sicilies in 1735, and he reigned in Naples until called to the throne of Spain in 1759 on the death of his

stepbrother, Ferdinand IV. This unexpected elevation prevented him from ever living in the palace which was being built at such cost for his court and his government, but the decoration of the building was continued for his brother, for the Bourbon rulers of the kingdom, and for the Bourbons of the early nineteenth century. Charles is regarded by Professor Hersey - (*Pace* Lord Jellicoe, Aston) - as a less corrupt monarch than his regularly belaboured successors, and a reformer, though opposed to Enlightenment principles, he took a close personal interest in architecture and in the social and physical benefits attendant upon the construction of the palace. In his later years in Spain, what impressed visitors most when presented to the king's apartments was his obsession with hunting, to the extent that the monarch appeared "nearly always" as Goya portrayed him, in old-fashioned clothes.

Patronage is a less important factor in Hersey's approach whose originality lies in the lucid and ingenious if not sometimes over-elaborate exploration of the building in relation to intellectual development in Naples, myth and government, of the contemporary Neapolitan philosopher, Giovanni Battista Vico. Some

readers will no doubt find what I have done too different from the source-hunting, style-distinguishing and influence-tracing that dominate the practice of art-history nowadays. But times have surely changed since such a description was broadly true.

Following his declared line of approach, Hersey concentrates on the figurative decoration of the gardens and the palace, rather than on the architecture itself: the heart of the book, a chapter entitled "The River Road" is an extended, virtuosic analysis of the fountains, their progression as a historical sequence, and their relation to the patron and his dynasty. Neptune "emerges over earth and air and over the fires of hell and of Vesuvius. He shelters Diana, queen of the mountains, and short-grained Apollo's attack on Aeneas. It is with Neptune, chief god of the Bourbon's maritime kingdom, that we reckon in the end." At times the analysis seems to be carried too far and Vico's name is conjunctively invoked without any real evidence of the exact nature of his involvement. The comparative absence of references to the development of fountain decoration generally also diminishes the full impact of what was evidently the most ambitious of all the many fountain schemes of the time. By contrast, when he discusses the

decoration of the Palace and the Herculean and Apollonian splendour. Hersey illuminates the whole character of Baroque allegory, although he is led, by enlisting Vico (and others), to give almost as much weight to the later rooms as to those of Vanvitelli.

Of the architecture itself less is to be learnt from the book. The "number" of the title refers to the reduction of the plan to a grid system, a phenomenon discussed in some historical detail, but not. It would appear, especially relevant to Vanvitelli. Although the design is compared with de Certeau's *Buen Retiro*, the opportunity to consider palace design as an international phenomenon north and south of the Alps is not seized upon with anything like the minutiae of allegorical decoration. The author's method of times leads him towards fantasy: "The halberds and bodyguards of the king's court, the palatine brigades hold aloft the palace canopy for similarly colourful brigades of human guards, servants and courtiers." On the other hand the minutiae of the upper vestibule, one of the most unusual and conspicuous features of the design, is mentioned only in passing as "vaults lifted into white-crowns".

October Books from Yale

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to the editor

Olaf Stapledon

Sir, - In his review of Leslie Fiedler's *Olaf Stapledon: A Man Divided* (September 23), Brian Aldiss offers an articulate and carefully reasoned assessment of Stapledon's claims on the attention of readers. Indeed, there is a more cogent and reliable guide to Stapledon's fiction to be found in Aldiss's 3,000 words than in the 200 pages of the book under review. At the risk of seeming to quibble, I would just add a few reservations to Aldiss's discussion.

Fiedler is not "the first person to write a book on Stapledon's oeuvre". There is a better book, Patrick McCarthy's *Olaf Stapledon* (Boston: G. K. Hall), published a year earlier than Fiedler's, far more secure in its research and more skilful in its criticism. Unfortunately, because of the Oxford imprint, Fiedler's book is likely to receive more notice, but those who care about Stapledon's work and about responsible literary criticism would do better to make the effort to find a copy of McCarthy.

It isn't quite true that Stapledon "won no great reputation in his lifetime". During his most productive period - from 1930 to 1944 - the reviews of his fiction (a number of them in the *TL*) were often astonishingly lavish and detailed. While Stapledon paid a price (and knew he did) for choosing to live near Liverpool rather than in the capital and while it is true that his reputation was eclipsed after the Second World War, his literary achievements were widely recognized in the 1930s. If Aldiss is right that few writers of science fiction have acknowledged a debt to Stapledon, it is worth insisting that Stapledon himself never used the term "science fiction" to describe his work.

But letters to Stapledon from John Dover Wilson, Virginia Woolf, Arthur Koestler, and others are in the book.

many others attest eloquently to the admiration of other writers for his fiction during his lifetime.

Finally, I would strongly second Aldiss's view that Stapledon is "a very English kind of writer". That is a fact that particularly embarrassing kind of North American egotist like Leslie Fiedler is incapable of appreciating. But the awkward truth is that, aside from a chapter in Naomi Mitchison's autobiography *You May Well Ask*, most of the work of reclaiming Stapledon's importance has fallen to Americans like myself. I, for one, wish that more English scholars would join us - and that English publishers would reissue Stapledon's work in his own country. Having been partly responsible for assembling the new Stapledon Collection at the University of Liverpool's Sydney Jones Library - thousands of manuscripts, letters, diaries, lecture notes, and other biographical and literary documents - I now hope that English critics will turn their attention to this very English writer. Careful study of the collection at the Sydney Jones Library will not only reveal the extent of Stapledon's achievement but will challenge the notion that he led a "humdrum existence". In fact, Fiedler's "pop psychology" and melodramatic posturing over Stapledon's supposed peculiarities, about which Aldiss properly complains, will seem even more gauche and crude to anyone who troubles to compare the actual record of Stapledon's life and career with the inventions sprung from Fiedler's vulgarizations of Freud.

ROBERT CROSSLEY.

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Darlan's Death

Sir, - I have only just seen your very kind and helpful review, for which I am most grateful, of my book *Seeing Europe Ablaze*, by M. R. D. Foot (August 19). He has however made one serious mistake in that there is no suggestion in the book, nor in fact, that René de la Chapelle who shot Admiral Darlan was "ordered forward to his task by SOE".

DOUGLAS DODDS-PARKER.

9 North Court, Great Peter Street, London SW1.

'Perfect Happiness'

Sir, - In my review of Penelope Lively's *Perfect Happiness* (September 30), I expressed reservations about one of the characters, the journalist Zoo. These weren't quite the reservations that appeared.

What I wrote was that her "assiduous and sense shine through the jet-lag" and I meant it as a compliment. Whining through the jet-lag may be what most of us do, but Zoo is tougher and brighter than that.

JOANNA MOTION.

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Schopenhauer

Sir, - Michael Tanner now admits (October 20) that he misquoted me twice in his review of my book *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. But in neither case was it just a slip of a word. In one (from page 314) he managed to miss out one word here; two words there; two whole phrases somewhere else; insert a word of his own; and then in two other places substitute his words for mine. This illustrates to perfection the standard of the review as a whole. And it will not do for him now to claim that he kept his sense, for he omitted the main point but altogether; and in any case he declared his purpose, in introducing the quotation, was to mock my tone.

Unwisely, Tanner challenges me to specify more of his errors and misrepresentations. Here goes, though the following can be only a few of them.

Among this week's contributors appears on page 1141:

The very first statement he makes about the content of my book is: "Schopenhauer's appeal is alleged to be primarily 'existential' - he is supposed to be able to help one to live more adequately." This is sheer invention. Nowhere do I say this. At one point (p. 154) I remark that Schopenhauer is closer in spirit to Existential Humanism than either to Romanticism or to the Enlightenment, but I say nothing about this being the primary appeal of his work, nor do I think any such thing. This flight of imagination is followed in the same paragraph by a quotation from me which Tanner describes as an "exhortation to philosophers to take their subject seriously". It is nothing of the sort. It is part of a discussion of the danger which Schopenhauer thinks faces intellectuals of all kinds (see p. 45), namely that of engaging with life and their own work too much in terms of concepts and not enough in terms of direct perception, intuitive judgment, felt insight and emotional response, given that reasoning can add nothing by way of empirical content to the data with which it works. When this misconception is removed it also takes away the only support offered by Tanner's review for his asinine personal remark (about me) that he would no doubt reply that he, like Schopenhauer, is contemptuous of professional philosophers.

We come next to the mangled quotation already mentioned. This is about Gilbert Ryle - and on this subject Tanner misses out everything of significance. The two widest-known books of linguistic philosophy are Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*: they come out only four years apart, and they had a shaping influence on several generations of philosophy students. They are now thoroughly established modern classics. But it is a fact, which I demonstrate in my book, that the two doctrines for which *The Concept of Mind* is most famous had both been set out clearly and at length over a hundred years before by Schopenhauer. It is also a fact that when this was pointed out to Ryle by Patrick Cardiner he acknowledged it to be true. It is also a fact that he then confessed to Cardiner (and he had read Schopenhauer before he wrote *The Concept of Mind*) and it so happened that he subsequently repeated all this to me - and I have checked it with Cardiner. However, because these interesting and important truths about contemporary philosophy were nowhere in print, and because practically no one read Schopenhauer, they remained generally unknown. I believe I am the first to publish them. Doing so inevitably had to take the form of reporting conversations, for these are the only sources. Now the incredible thing about Tanner's treatment of all this is that he leaves out the main point in its entirety; he quotes twenty lines of me on Ryle, but he substitutes a row of dots for Ryle's confession and the whole of Cardiner's role, and quotes (or rather misquotes) round these, putting in only the ancillary aspects of Ryle's talk and my response to it, which he then characterizes as "this combination of the chatty and the pretentious, emerging as platitudes". Later he sneers that "Tanner's account is a good deal of time-honoured 'with' those professional philosophers a contempt for whom he has invented and put into my mouth. Subsequently he goes on to pass the law of Schopenhauer's all-pervading influence on Wittgenstein, which I devoted thirty pages of the book to demonstrating with examples; in the same uncomprehending manner.

He begins his next paragraph by complaining that I fail to point out that Schopenhauer does not hold to his pessimism consistently. But I do point this out; in my opening chapter, the whole of page 25 is devoted to the various aspects of this point. As for Tanner's charge that I address myself more to the central body of Schopenhauer's philosophical system, namely his epistemology and ontology (than I do to the pessimism in which Tanner is more interested, this can only be described as a piece of sheer invention.

In a book called *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. He derides me for saying that value-judgments, pessimistic or otherwise, cannot be derived from truth-claims, and says this shows that I do not know what has been going on in philosophy since the early 1950s, in spite of my *Men of Ideas*. If he turns to page 159 of *Men of Ideas* he will see the following exchange between me and the Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford:

MAOEE: But there are, aren't there, philosophers who want to maintain that, even at the end of the road, facts and values somehow remain mixed?

HARE: There are... but may I say that I've never seen any argument for this view that didn't rest on confusions.

I agree completely with Hare about this. And if Tanner needs published evidence that I am aware of the issues involved he will find it in my "Conversation with Bernard Williams", on pages 150-66 of the book *Modern British Philosophy*, published twelve years ago.

The way Tanner, at the end of still the same paragraph, associates Schopenhauer's key use of the word Will with willing suggests that he fails to understand the most important distinction in the whole of Kant's, and then again Schopenhauer's, philosophy, that between phenomena and noumenon. Suspicion turns to certainty when he writes: "Maoee says that [Will] means simply 'energy'." This is flabbergasting. It proves - what indeed the whole review illustrates - that Tanner has no idea what any of this is about. I devote five pages (pp. 140-5) to demonstrating, with detailed examples, the fact that Schopenhauer's key sense of the word Will has nothing to do with willing, and to discussing the problem of what to call the noumenon.

If Will, in view of the fact that the word for any concept derived from experience is bound to be radically misleading, and any other word merely a longer substitute for "x", I conclude that there is no satisfactory solution to this problem, but that the least evil may perhaps be "energy". That Tanner is hopelessly at sea in Kantian philosophy is reconfirmed when he says that Kant, and I in expounding him, never explains how fundamental problems concerning time, space and causality are met by transcendental idealism: in fact some of Kant's best-known work is devoted to such explanations, and the line they follow is indicated clearly by me in several passages of my book, for instance those beginning on page 93, page 227 and page 278. Tanner says that I personally embrace transcendental idealism. I do not. I specifically say: "On the contrary, I suspect there may be room for a better theory" (p. 82).

In his attempts to defend himself Tanner makes much of the fact that he has given page references. But anyone who reads the whole book and then checks these references - in other words, does not read them out of context - will find that in not a single instance do they justify the use Tanner has made of them. I have given examples already. Another, and this is a whopper, concerns page 104, where he says that I congratulate Schopenhauer on effecting a marriage between the philosophical thesis of idealism and the physiological discoveries of modern science. What I actually do there is something totally different: I remark that by following up the publication of his philosophy of perception with a scientific treatise on optics Schopenhauer became the first philosopher to marry a Kantian account of perception to the necessarily corresponding physical account. It is of this simply staggering misrepresentation that Tanner says: "At this serious attempt at sorting out or correcting misstatements."

I'm afraid I have to throw these words back at him with regard to the part of his review which deals with my discussion of Schopenhauer's influence on Wagner.

BRYAN MAOEE.

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'The Oxford Book of Dreams'

Sir, - The dream attributed to Mary Wollstonecraft by Rosemary Dunne in her review (October 7) and by Stephen Brook in his anthology *The Oxford Book of Dreams* was of course not Mary Wollstonecraft's dream at all, but the dream of her daughter Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. The baby referred to was her first child, Shelley's daughter, born out of wedlock and prematurely on February 22, 1815. The child lived for two weeks. Mary Wollstonecraft had died in 1797, two weeks after the birth of her daughter Mary. Shelley and Mary Godwin did not name this first child of theirs.

CLAIRE TOMALIN.

57 Gloucester Crescent, London, NW1.

Books from Argentina

Sir, - The continuing absurdity of the position over Argentinian books (TL, October 7) was highlighted by a general press report (October 8), that General Menéndez, Governor of the Falkland Islands during the Argentinian occupation last year, has been given sixty days imprisonment in Buenos Aires, for publishing his highly critical account of the handling of the Falklands war by the junta, in a book which may be freely purchased in Argentina, but not in Britain.

STANLEY ALDERSON.

7 Highfield Avenue, Cambridge.

Llanthony

Sir, - My friend allowed to comment on a puzzling statement about Llanthony, which occurs in the review by J. A. Burrow (September 30) of the edition of Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors.

The reviewer says, with reference to the map printed in this book, that it "seems to confuse Llanthony Secundum in the Black Mountains with Llanthony-by-Gloucester. But Llanthony (or Llanthony-by-Gloucester is Llanthony Secundum; the original Augustinian foundation, Llanthony Prima, was simply Llanthony Priory, was in the Black Mountains. Llanthony-by-Gloucester was founded for some of the cousins who took refuge there when Welsh risings made life in Wales too precarious for the loss resolute among them. The editors have produced a map showing Llanthony Priory quite correctly in the Black Mountains, but very naturally omitting Llanthony-by-Gloucester, which does not come into the book. They are not confused in the least; the confusion is in the mind of the reviewer.

MARJORIE CHERNALL.

Clare Hall, Cambridge.

'Bendor'

Sir, - Reviewing Leslie Fiedler's book *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (September 2), E. S. Tanner quotes from the book, "Meanwhile Bendor decided he could not risk any treachery from the Senatus, so they really the way of it." "My father, the late Captain E. H. Tanner, wrote in his (unpublished) diary, 'Distant Jakob tells us in his useful contribution to Hartmut, Bendor's *Kafka Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 1979) first found his way into print in 1940. The word was then that long level of adventures in the course of which he became a weapon, usable as well as the more right-wing brand. In the 1940s it took on an Existentialist following with the help of Sartre and Camus, and many others. These were the versions that allowed Malcolm Lowry to speak, as early as 1936, of a 'perfect Kafka situation', the New Yorker, in 1947, of a 'Kafkaesque' lesson already taught by Michael

Dentan in an exceptionally intelligent and sensitive book: that besides the anguish, frustration, despair, alienation and *angst* which had been diagnosed in Kafka's writings, a good deal of humour could also be found there. At the same time Kafka's narrative perspectives and strategies were much more fully appreciated, and this, in its turn, led to a more differentiated view of Kafka's version of "fantastic realism". Much of this development is implied in the brief survey of Kafka's art which John Updike has now contributed in a foreword to the Schocken edition of the *Complete Short Stories*:

Kafka epitomizes one aspect of [the] modern mind-set: a sensation of anxiety and shame whose center cannot be located and therefore cannot be placated; a sense of

From this week, the price of the *TL* is 60p - the first increase since May 1981.

Difficulties of the Kafkaesque

S. S. Prawer

nightmare of blind alleys"; Elaine Dundy, in *The Daid Avocado*, of "postcards and wires to the Paris embassy... Kafkaesquely rerouted to that powerful man in charge"; the *London Times*, in 1963, of a "Kafkaesque grip and... pitiless exposure of the cruelties of tortures, hope"; or *Newsweek* in 1972 following the example Koestler had given as early as 1954 of the "Kafkaesque self-abnegation of the infamous [Russian] show-trials". These were the versions by means of which English-speaking readers' way of seeing, and of reacting to, the most ordinary phenomena have been indelibly affected. One's experience of crossing a frontier or waiting to be dealt with by even the most civil of civil servants, or of waking up with the usual disorientation in the morning, is different before one has read Kafka and after. But our literary experience too becomes richer if we

Many other imperfections of the Muirs' pioneering versions have been highlighted over the years. Scholar after scholar has told us of their tendency to tone down Kafka's ominousness and make his central figures more kindly than they are in the original. They misunderstood some of Kafka's phrases and sentences - the Penguin *Complete Novels* still allows them to translate "atrend schwebte das ewige Licht davor" in the Cathedral scene of *The Trial*, as "The errant light hovered over it like an intruder" instead of "The eternal light swayed disturbingly in front of it"; or, as the brisk new translation by Douglas Scott and Chris Walker (Picador 1977) has it: "The perpetual light of the sanctuary-lamp hanging in front got in the way". The Muirs also tended to obscure Kafka's cross-references by elegant variation. Thus they have given his most famous story, "Die

Letters to Milena
19pp. Penguin, Paperback, £2.50.
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When the happy fetishist couple of John Osborne's *Under Plain Cover*, first performed at the Royal Court Theatre in 1962, dubbed a pair of long black knickers "Kafkaesque", it initiated a new stage to a process of semantic appropriation which had effectively begun in 1928. In that year, as many reviewers in the *TL* had commented the German versions of *The Castle* and *America* with strong emphasis on what he saw as their apocalyptic or metaphysical elements, their affinities with surrealism, and their underlying symbolist intention". He had thus prepared the ground for the pioneering translation of *The Castle* by Willa and Edwin Muir, and for Edwin Muir's interpretation, heavily influenced by Kafka's friend, translator and editor Max Brod, of what he took to be that novel's religious or metaphysical "allegory". The earliest reviewers of the Muir translation seemed content, for the most part, with the view that *The Castle* was a kind of last version of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, though they also showed themselves impressed by its dark, mysterious atmosphere and by its "unlikeable" quality. This image of Kafka still prevailed when his early story, *The Judgement*, an English translation of which had already appeared in 1928, was published in 1933 by a number of other stories, again translated by Willa and Edwin Muir, and gathered into a volume entitled *The Great Wall of China*. Before long, however, the label "surrealism" was superseded by descriptive phrases like "extreme modernism", which meant, for the most part, a study with the work of T. S. Eliot, and especially affinity with *The Waste Land*, which had first been published in the same year as Max Brod's original German edition of *The Castle*. Kafka's work came to be seen as a reflection of modern bureaucracy - especially Central European bureaucracy - as well as a series of nightmares or waking dreams that called for Freudian interpretations. It was thought to anticipate, prophetically, the rise of totalitarianism, especially in its fascist variety; at the same time more and more voices were heard to denigrate Kafka's works as hopelessly bourgeois reflections of a dying bourgeois culture. Yet it was clear that a Marxist like Edward Updike was at least as powerfully affected by the reading of Kafka as a non-Marxist like Rex Warner. The very word "Kafkaesque", Distant Jakob tells us in his useful contribution to Hartmut, Bendor's *Kafka Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 1979) first found his way into print in 1940. The word was then that long level of adventures in the course of which he became a weapon, usable as well as the more right-wing brand. In the 1940s it took on an Existentialist following with the help of Sartre and Camus, and many others. These were the versions that allowed Malcolm Lowry to speak, as early as 1936, of a "perfect Kafka situation", the New Yorker, in 1947, of a "Kafkaesque"

infinite difficulty with things, imposing every step; a sensitivity acute beyond usefulness, as if the nervous system, flayed of its old hide of social usage and religious belief, must record every touch as pain. In Kafka's peculiar and highly original case this dreadful quality is mixed with immense tenderness, oddly good humour, and a certain severe and reassuring formality. The combination makes him an artist, but rarely can an artist have struggled against greater inner resistance and more sincere diffidence as to the worth of his art.

Jorge Luis Borges, who uses his foreword to *Stories 1904-1924* to make the shrewd point (directed at Virgil no less than Kafka) that "a man who really wishes to see his work consigned to oblivion does not entrust the task to anyone else", confesses to have thought of disposing of forever Erich Heller's essay: "This work could be defined as a parable or series of descriptions on the theme of the moral relationship of the individual with his God and with God's incomprehensible universe." But Borges's foreword has, of course, a value that transcends any argument about the validity of his interpretation: it offers valuable clues to features of Kafka's writings which have helped to shape Borges's own distinguished fictions.

Penguin books have now reissued, in one volume, the versions in which Kafka's novels have been read by English-speaking readers in the last half century: versions by Willa and Edwin Muir in the first instance, supplemented in the 1950s by additional material rendered into English by Elaine Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser. These were the versions discussed in Eliot's *Criticism and Comment*; they were read and absorbed by Rex Warner - Edward Updike, the younger Auden (who later committed himself to our age the same that Kafka bears to our age the same that of related to theirs), William Shakespeare how to theirs. These were the versions that allowed Malcolm Lowry to speak, as early as 1936, of a "perfect Kafka situation", the New Yorker, in 1947, of a "Kafkaesque"

have experienced, even in translation, how Kafka merges the myth of the Wanderer and Seeker with that of the Outsider and that of the Prisoner; how his "open parables" find valid objects for their correlative for inner states that are subtler and more complex than those which can be described in Freudian terminology; how he uses the possibilities of humour and "play" in fictions whose ultimate concerns are deeply serious; how he adds important new nuances to the more and more complex use of narrative voice in twentieth-century fiction.

The career of these English versions to date gives them something akin to classic status; but their shortcomings have been frequently discussed and should, by now, be widely appreciated. We know, better than the Muirs did, that the text prepared by Max Brod was often far from accurate; and while one may approve of Penguin's decision to reissue the three novels in one band, one can only find it irresponsible of the 1951 German version of *The Castle*, on which the Muir-Wilkins-Kaiser translation is based, as the "definitive" edition. The one and only "definitive" edition, in 1983, is the critical edition of *Das Schloss*, published last year by the S. Fischer Verlag (reviewed overleaf).

It is quite clear that what we need is an English translation based on this new critically edited version and embodying the changes it has made in the German text. Prepared by Max Brod, the same is true of *America*, for which we must even find a new title; for as the critical edition by Just Schillemeit shows, the only German title that can claim Kafka's own authority is *Der Verschollene*. *The Man Who Was Lost*, perhaps, or *Missing: Presumed Dead*. As for *The Trial* - for that, it seems, we shall have to wait a while, until various questions of access to manuscripts have been resolved; but no doubt this will also, like the rest of Kafka's works, letters and diaries, eventually appear in a new, critically edited form. In the meantime prospective translators would do well to think about an English title which comes nearer than *The Trial* to the sense of legal proceedings and other "processes" (including bodily ones) suggested by *Der Prozess*.

I was sitting in a box at the theatre, with my wife next to me. An exciting play was being performed, all about jealousy; in a shining hall sur-

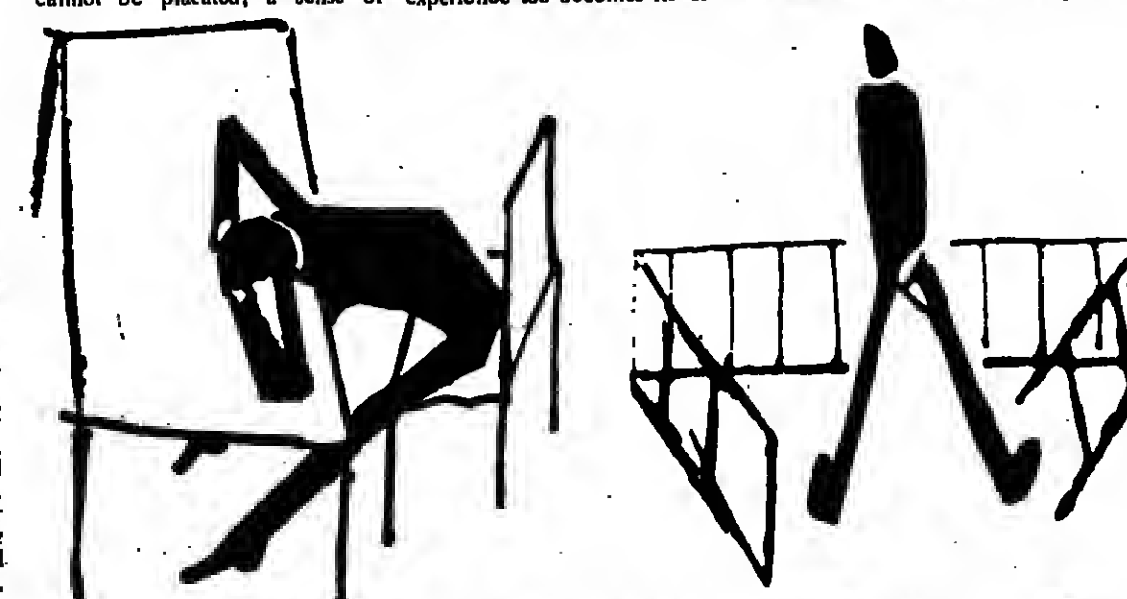
rounding by pillars a man was just raising his dagger against his wife, who was slowly trying to reach the door. Tense and curious one leaned over the balustrade, I felt my wife's curly hair against my temple. Then we started and drew back, for something stirred on the balustrade; what we had taken for its velvet cushioning was the back of a long, thin man, exactly as narrow as the balustrade, who had until then been lying on his belly and who was now slowly turning over, as if he were seeking a more comfortable position. My wife trembled and clung to me. Very close to me was his face, narrower than my hand, embarrassingly clean like a wax-figure, with a pointed black beard. "Why do you frighten us?", I called out; "what are you doing here?" "Beg pardon," said the man, "I am an admirer of your wife's; to feel her elbows on my body makes me happy." "Emil, I beg of you, protect me!" my wife cried out. "My name is Emil too," said the man, and he supported his head on one hand and lay there as on a divan. "Come to me, you sweet little woman." "You good-for-nothing!" I said, "one more word from you and you'll find yourself lying in the stalls down there." And as though I were sure that this word would in fact be forthcoming I tried to push him down, but that wasn't so easy, he did seem to be firmly attached to the balustrade after all, it was as though he were built in, I wanted to roll him off but did not succeed, he only laughed and said: "Leave that, you little fool, don't waste your strength prematurely, the battle is only just beginning, and its outcome will in fact be that your wife satisfies my longing." "Never!" my wife exclaimed and then, turning to me: "Come on now, please, hurry up and push him down." "I can't," I called out, "you can see what efforts I am making, but there is some trickery here, it just can't be done." "O dear, o dear," my wife lamented, what is to become of me." "Be quiet!" I said, "I beg of you; you are only making matters worse with all your excitement, I have a new plan now, I will outguess this devil here with my knife and then tip the whole thing down along with this fellow." But now I could not find my knife. "Don't you know where my knife might be?" I asked. "Could I have felt it in my overcoat?" I was on the point, almost, of rushing to the cloakroom when my wife brought me to my senses. "Now you want to leave me alone, Emil!" she called out. "But what can I do when I haven't a knife?" I called back. "Take mine," she said and searched her handbag, but all she came up with, of course, was a tiny little knife made of mother-of-pearl.

The nightmare and Freudian elements of this passage are so characteristic of Kafka as its cool, precise notations and its black humour.

The Penguin and Schocken *Complete Stories* face us with a puzzle, however, which goes beyond questions raised by its exclusions. Both volumes are dated 1983; but the introductory material, notes and bibliography, prepared along with the text by Nahum N. Glatzer, are dated 1971. Has it taken all of twelve years for the typescript to be transformed into print? And if so - why wasn't someone commissioned to update this material?

The question is important, not only because of the critical and biographical research that has been going on since 1971 and should have had some recognition in the bibliography, but also because many of the items reprinted here have been superseded by the appearance, in 1973, of Kafka's *Shorter Works*, translated and edited by Sir Malcolm Pasley and published by Secker and Warburg. Sir Malcolm has once again gone behind Brod's German text to the original manuscripts, has restored omissions and deleted passages that were clearly rejected by their author, and has corrected countless misreadings and mispunctuations. He has then translated the result into English, leaving intact what still proved usable in the work of the older translators while rendering the rest into prose that

was sitting in a box at the theatre, with my wife next to me. An exciting play was being performed, all about jealousy; in a shining hall sur-



Two drawings from Kafka's diary, reproduced in *The World of Franz Kafka*, edited by J. P. Stern.

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dovetails effortlessly with theirs. Until the Fischer Verlag critical edition gets round to the shorter pieces, the Pasley versions will have to be consulted even by those who can tackle Kafka's original German.

But now we also have J. A. Underwood's version of those works which Kafka himself saw through the press (or at least corrected in proof) and which did not, therefore, present the same textual difficulties as the posthumously rescued novels and stories. Underwood has cleared up some of the earlier translators' confusions: Gregor Samsa now wakes up transformed into a "giant bug" rather than a less disgusting "insect". "Ungeheures Ungeziefer" suggested "monstrous vermin" at first; but then the acw translator thought that readers might balk at having "vermin" used in the singular. It is, I suppose, too late now to protest that Kafka specifically requested his publishers not to have his "Ungeziefer" portrayed in an illustration: the Penguin Modern Classics edition of *Metamorphosis* and *Other Stories* had a bug in its cover when it first appeared in 1961, and the Penguin *Short Stories*, the *Future Stories 1904-1914*, and the *Medonald* hardback of the same book, all come adorned with various bugs and beetles on their front covers.

Another famous crux in "The Metamorphosis" concerns poor transformed Gregor Samsa listening to his sister playing the violin: "War er ein Tier, da ihn Musik so ergreifen?" The Muirs translate this as: "Was he an animal, that music had such an effect on him?" They were thinking, I suppose, of ancient legends about the powerful effect music had on savage and not so savage beasts, and made an appreciation of music an index of animality. J. A. Underwood, however, plumps for an alternative interpretation frequently urged against that of the Muirs, which makes music an index of Gregor's status as a human being: "Could he really be an animal, if music affected him so deeply?" It is interesting to find that Walter Schafnisch's commentary on the story, which has been much used in German schools since it first appeared in 1981, specifically allows both interpretations.

Underwood's version has corrected some of his predecessors' slips and tonings-down. I cannot seriously think of his versions as superseding those of the Muirs. His ear for English prose is less sure than theirs, as may be seen if we juxtapose a segment of one of Kafka's characteristic long sentences in the old and the new version.

wenn man mit grösserer als der gewöhnlichen Bedeutung erkennt, dass man ja mehr Kraft als Bedürfnis hat, die schnellste Veränderung leicht zu bewirken und zu ertragen (Der politische Spaziergang) when you recognize with more than usual significance that your strength is greater than your need to accomplish effortlessly the swiftest of changes and to cope with it (Edwin and Willa Muir)

when one realizes with a greater sense of significance than usual that one has, after all, more ability than one has need easily to effect and endure the most rapid change . . . (J. A. Underwood)

What is worse, Underwood is less sensitive to tone and speech-level than the earlier translators. Take the beginning and the end of Kafka's last completed short story: "Josephine the Singer, or The Mouse People".

Unsere Sängerin heisst Josefina. Wer sie nicht gehört hat, kennt nicht die Macht des Gesanges. Es gibt niemanden, den ihr Gesang nicht fürreist, was umso höher zu bewerten ist, als unser Geschlecht im ganzen Musik nicht liebt. Stiller Frieden ist uns die liebste Musik . . .

The extended genitive ending of "Macht des Gesanges", the phrase "unser Geschlecht" (rather than "unser Volk"), the inflected form "niemanden", all indicate that the speaker is deliberately using, at this point, a solemn, poetic, somewhat archaic way of speaking which forces him to draw on literary clichés. When we come to the phrase "stiller Frieden", therefore, we are prepared to supply a "poetic" context—in this case, perhaps, with the help of an author to whose work and personality Kafka felt particularly drawn, Franz Grillparzer.

Eines nur ist Glück hienieden. Eins, das innem stiller Frieden Und die schuldbehaftete Brust!

By translating "stiller Frieden" as "peace and quiet", Underwood slips into the wrong register, for the phrase is much too everyday; the Muirs "tranquil peace", on the other hand, has just the right Biedermeier ambience. And then there is the extraordinary ending of this same tale, splendidly analysed in Roy Pascal's recent book *Kafka's Narrators* (1982): an ending culminating in the phrase "gostelerte Erlösung" which combines a noun that has been called one of the key-words of the Kafka period with no objective hallowed by its prominent use in the writings of Goethe. To translate this phrase as "an even greater release", as Underwood does, is ludicrously inadequate: the Muirs, who have been followed by the Penguin translators, are much closer to the original, though many of their renderings are still open to question. The rendering "heightened redemption" suggested by Heinz Politzer and adopted by Pascal.

Even more serious than this inadequate appreciation of stylistic level and tone is Underwood's failure to respect the changes of tense which must play so important a part in any assessment of narrative perspective in Kafka's writings. To translate "Die Volk hört sie an und geht darüber hinweg" (present tense, to indicate continuous and repeated action) as "We listened to her and took no notice of what she said" seems to me not only indefensible. The Muirs, once again, have it exactly right: "The people listen to her arguments and pay no attention."

Again and again we find the Muirs much truer to their author, or just

simply more accurate, than J. A. Underwood. The line I have just quoted shows that where Kafka writes "das Volk", they correctly give us "the people" while the new translator finds it necessary to substitute "we". Something similar happens in that passage of "The Metamorphosis" in which the Head Clerk invokes the authority of the head of the firm, calling him "der Chef" — "The Chief", in the Muirs' translation, once varied to "your chief". To make the Head Clerk call him "your superior" throughout, as he does in the Underwood version, is surely out of character: he is clearly a man who is conscious of hierarchies, and who is therefore not likely to forget that he is speaking of his own superior as well as Samsa's.

There are some puzzling omissions, too, in this new version. The Head Clerk's citation of the law, for instance, did they have some special information which enabled them to change "aussprechen" to "ansprechen"? There is also at least one sad omission. The letters to Milena are particularly language-conscious, as is unusual when an author writes to his translator; and one of the forns this language-consciousness takes is an unusual awareness of the "physicality" of word-rhythm. This shows itself in comments on the relationship between theme and grammatical structure: "I have the sensation of leading you by the hand behind me along the subterranean, dark, low, ugly corridors of the story, almost endlessly (that's why the sentences are endless, didn't you realize this?)" and it shows up also in his comments on the very sound of the Czech question "iste zid?" — "are you Jewish?"

Don't you see how in the "Iste" the fist is withdrawn to gather muscle strength? And then in the "zid" the cheerful, unfailing, forward-flying blow? These are the side-effects which the Czech language frequently possesses for the German ear. Once you asked, for instance, why it was that I made my stay here dependent on a letter, and immediately answered yourself: "nechpu?" — "I don't understand." A peculiar word in Czech and even more in your mouth, it's so severe, callous, cold-eyed, parsimonious, and above all, it's so much like a hammer, that the word the Jews crack upon one another, or more correctly, the first syllable makes an attempt to seize the nut, it won't work, then the second syllable tears the mouth wide open, now the nut fits into it, and the third syllable finally cracks it, d'you hear the teeth? Perhaps the three syllables also suggest the three movements of the Amstel in the clock in Prague. Arrival, showing themselves, and angry departure. . .

In his admirable account of Kafka's letters to his fiancée Felice Bauer, *Kafka's Other Trial*, Elias Canetti has shown not only how much light these letters throw on Kafka's work and personality, but also to low large an extent they can be regarded as literary works in their own right. This is no less true of the letters Kafka wrote towards the end of his life to his Czech translator Milena Jesenská, with whom he had one of those complicated relationships that characterized all his dealings with women before he met Dora Dymant. Hartmut Binder's *Kafka in neuer Sicht* (Stuttgart 1976) has exhaustively documented what links these letters have with the later fiction, particularly *The Castle*, but one need not be fully aware of this to be fascinated by the vividness with which Kafka here analyses states of mind and presents situations or people. Rereading these letters in English, I was again enthralled by Kafka's lively sense of the ridiculous, as when he describes how he crept along the houses by the Franziskanerplatz one Sunday afternoon and ran into Milena's husband "coming towards me in an almost much more brilliant condition, two heads each expert, though each in its utterly different way". The letters to Milena are full of brilliantly told anecdotes from the lives of earlier writers. Casanova, Helio, Don Quixote which Kafka applies to his own case with existential earnestness. They show a constant concern with judging and being judged. By means of varied images, ranging from the tightly witty to the horrifying, they seek to convey to Kafka's non-Jewish correspondent what being Jewish meant to him. Above all they are full of unparalleled expressive images that could easily find a place among his shorter fictions.

Writing letters . . . means to denude oneself before the ghosts, something for which they greedily wait. Written kisses don't reach their destination, rather they are drunk on the way by the ghosts.

Or again:

But to reflect on these things is useless. It's as though one were to try to smash a single cauldron in Hell, firstly it doesn't work, and secondly, if it should work one hurries to death in the molten mass flowing out of it, while Hell continues to exist in all its glory. One has to tackle it differently. . . .

As these quotations show, Tania and James Stern have done their work well, though there are some strange divergences from the German text. When they translated "die Medusa aussprechen" as "addressing Medusa", for instance, did they have some special information which enabled them to change "aussprechen" to "ansprechen"? There is also at least one sad omission. The letters to Milena are particularly language-conscious, as is unusual when an author writes to his translator; and one of the forns this language-consciousness takes is an unusual awareness of the "physicality" of word-rhythm. This shows itself in comments on the relationship between theme and grammatical structure: "I have the sensation of leading you by the hand behind me along the subterranean, dark, low, ugly corridors of the story, almost endlessly (that's why the sentences are endless, didn't you realize this?)" and it shows up also in his comments on the very sound of the Czech question "iste zid?" — "are you Jewish?"

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But why, oh why, when the translators rightly included this passage, did they omit the parallel passage in which Kafka subjects a German word, "trotzdem", to the same treatment he here gives the Czech word "nechpu", explaining to Milena that "trotz" gives a sensation of colliding with a world that is still present while "dem" suggests sinking down into the nothingness which, in the end, is all that remains?

However well the translators did their work, they had to rely on what probably the worst-edited text in the whole Kafka canon. Willy Haas, to whom we owe the preservation of these letters much as we owe that of the posthumous texts to Max Brod, has out and censured them without indicating where the omissions come, and arranged them into a sequence that is badly in need of revision (should not the position of first and second letters be inverted?), and despite the claim that he "annihilated [the letters] with the utmost care" his notes are constantly found to be insufficient to give the reader the background information he has a right to expect. His sparse and desultory footnotes even fail to identify which work of Kafka's Milena has been translating at a given point of their correspondence. Some of the material omitted by Haas must be accessible, for Hartmut Binder used it when he wrote *Kafka in neuer Sicht*. But even if copyright difficulties prevented its publication, someone at Penguin Books should surely have checked and supplemented Haas's editorial notes, "an edition of textual criticism" (you don't need textual criticism — you use it in making your edition), and supplied such grossly out-of-date information as that which tells us that

we know Kafka's first fiancée only "the girl from Berlin". We know Brod, of course, that her name was Felice Bauer, and that her initials, F. B., appear in her given name and in most important writings, including "The Judgment" and *The Trial*. The Classics could think of something more than the misspelling of one of the translators' names on the title-page, and a grossly inappropriate piece of cover: "Essentially a letter to the house of Weather and Kierkegaard, Kafka's love for Milena was an agony of bliss and despair, of ecstasy and desperation." Kafka's latest biographer, Ronald Hayman, has rightly described such contributions to the Kafka centenary as "serving coffee at what ought to be a banquet".

The point just made about Felice Bauer's name is not a trivial one: Kafka's disquisitions on Milena's name once again serve to show, he tells us, his particular interest in onomastics. The importance he attached to the name he gave to his fictional characters, and how he related these to the names of people who played a part in his own life, has been demonstrated in a book by Elisabeth Rajec, entitled *Namen und ihre Bedeutung in den Werken Franz Kafkas* (Bern, 1971). Translators have always known that they could not hope to convey to his English readers the suggestions inherent in names like Klammer, Erlanger or Bürger, they have therefore tended to leave them untransliterated, but also the first name of Kafka's characters in the form the author gave them. Underwood, however, in his new translation, follows the practice of the French rather than the English translators of Kafka's fiction. "I make no apology," the translator's preface of *Some 1904-1924* tells us, "for Anglicizing the first names Georg, Gregor, Gisel, Josef, and Josefina (they are people, not foreigners)." That sounds reasonable enough, until one turns to Kafka's diary entry for February 1913 to find what importance he attaches to the fact that the name "Georg" was exactly the same as the name of the first of his courtiers, if one decides to Anglicize that of the characters who comes to "Jensef Josef K" and is later whipped by a character significantly named "Franz"? And if so — must one not Anglicize Kafka's own first name as the cnver of the book in order to put up to its identity with that of a character now called "Franz"? Underwood's obviously limited decision to leave Karl Rosenfeld's name in its original German form, "The Stoker" also helps to suggest how difficult it is to Anglicize the name of Kafka uses with any precision. There is, therefore, for "Georg" rather than "George" Bendemann, for "Gregor" rather than "Gregory" Samsa, and for "Josef" rather than "Joseph" K.

Ronald Gray, in an essay included in Angel Florus's useful compilation *The Kafka Debate* (New York 1977), pertinently reminded English readers that "of all classic writers of German, Kafka is about the easiest to learn to read, so far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned. Moreover, of course, his meaning is ultimately accessible through the language he used and no substitute is ever entirely satisfactory." The most pressing task, therefore, is to get Kafka's German text right, and here the Fischer Verlag's new Critical Edition has a long list of improvements. The text is no longer begun to give us an impression of the text as it was written, but is a text as it was published, and the punctuation is no longer a matter of convenience, but a matter of principle. The new edition is a good deal of the essential Kafka canon to manage to come through.

On June 30, 1983, Kafka's hundredth birthday was celebrated over the Western world. Let us wish the work as authentic a text as possible, and let us wish the new English translations to give us the sympathy, sensitivity and skill of Willy and Edwin Muir, many more English readers will be able to read Kafka's work with the same pleasure and understanding as the German readers of the old translations. The new edition is a good deal of the essential Kafka canon to manage to come through.

Under Plain Cover

Not by Brod alone

Richie Robertson

FRANZ KAFKA

Die Schlösser
Hrsg. von Malcolm Pasley
Vol. 1. Textband. 498pp.
Vol. 2. Apparband. 488pp.
Vol. 3. 1981/82. 3
Frankfurt: Fischer. DM184 the set

Die Verschollene
Hrsg. von Jost Schillemeit
Vol. 1. Textband. 421pp.
Vol. 2. Apparband. 273pp.
Vol. 3. 1981/82. 2
Frankfurt: Fischer. DM138 the set

Many users of Duke Humphrey's Library in the Bodleian know that the shelves of the large cupboard on their left, as they enter from Arts End, are made of the manuscripts of a great Central European modernist.

They still know what a roundabout way the collection got there. Kafka's *Handwritten and Literary executor*, Max Brod, took it with him when, in March 1924, he set out for Palestine by the last train to leave Prague before the Nazi invasion. In 1956, the threat of war in the Middle East made Brod deposit the rest of the manuscripts in Zurich. A few years later, Sir Malcolm Pasley, as now a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and an impassioned Kafka scholar, learnt of their whereabouts through Kafka's grand-nephew, who was reading law at Lincoln College. Having obtained permission from Kafka's heirs to transfer the *Nachlass* to safe keeping in Oxford, Pasley brought the papers on Switzerland in a suitcase and deposited them in the Bodleian in April 1961. Since then he has acted as their custodian, while Professor Jost Schillemeit has been involved in Kafka studies for almost equally long. No more appropriate editors could have been found to prepare the first two volumes of the long-awaited critical edition of Kafka's writings.

We now have the first reliable texts, derived from the manuscripts, of two of the novels that made Kafka posthumously world-famous. (*Der Verwandte* "Lost Without Trace", was Kafka's name for the novel which Brod called *Amerika*.) The first volume of *Die Schlösser* contains the text of the second of the apparatus recording Kafka's alterations and reproducing the passages which he excised, along with introductions in which the editors describe the manuscripts, explain their methods, and reconstruct the composition of the novels. The apparatus is keyed to the text by page and line number, and by line number, making it easy to compare any variant with the corresponding passage from the text. A small number or underline indicates a readily intelligible change. Brod has been used to indicate the nature of Kafka's revisions. Consigning the apparatus to separate volumes was an admirable decision: instead of being obliged to struggle with unwieldy long-page volumes, the reader has two sets of substantial but handy (and handsome) volumes which it is a pleasure to read or consult. The clear, attractive and well-spaced type face makes a welcome change from the increasingly cramped typography of successive Fischer paperback editions. Reading editions in one volume, however, has the last and brief editorial apparatus, has also been published at the expense of the price of the two-volume set.

The result amply justifies the years of anxious and meticulous labour devoted to it by the editors, helped by a team of editorial and research assistants at the University of Würzburg. Proof-reading has been accomplished almost impeccably: in two volumes of the 500-page text of *Die Schlösser* I noted only two slips (on page 22, line 19, and page 387, line 8). And since the text is so accurate, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the accuracy of the German text of the *Handwritten and Literary executor*, and the accuracy of the German text of the *Verschollene*. Their contributions have been put to good use: this edition will decisively alter our

understanding of Kafka, and renders previous ones obsolete.

The textual history of Kafka's novels is peculiar, since he left them unfinished and they were published only after his death. Max Brod prepared the manuscripts for the press single-handed. A subsequent edition was revised with the help of the late Heinz Politzer, a distinguished Germanist and not primarily a textual scholar, and all current editions of the novels, until now, have been based on this revision.

It is now clear that Kafka's manuscripts were transcribed more inaccurately than the difficulty of deciphering his spidery but far from illegible handwriting could possibly excuse. The printers also introduced many typographical errors, not all of which were spotted in revision. Selective collation with the critical edition suggests that the current edition of *Das Schloss* and *Amerika* have, on average, at least two substantive errors per page. The blame for this lies with the transcribers and/or printers who transposed or omitted many words and entire phrases, and who turned "coarse mockery" into "great mockery", a "jumble of houses" into a "lot of houses", "not a sound" into "not a guest", etc. (I give translations only, to show how drastically Kafka's meaning was sometimes changed.) Visitors to the Kafka exhibition in the Bodleian this summer who took the opportunity of comparing pages from the manuscript of *Das Schloss* with their published counterparts saw for themselves what metamorphoses Kafka's text underwent. Now that we have his own words, the physical world of *Das Schloss* looks somewhat less eccentric and ramshackle. The light illuminating Lasemann's house in Chapter 1 turns out to come from a skylight ("Lücke"), not a crack ("Lücke"); and the driver Gerstcker now wraps a shawl round his throat, not round his head, showing that Kafka imagined him wearing an ordinary muffler, rather than wrapped up like a patient with mumps.

But there are more far-reaching differences between Kafka's original text and those of subsequent editions. Three of these differences can be illustrated from the opening paragraph of *Das Schloss*. Here is the hitherto standard text (Fischer, 1951):

Es war spät abends als K. ankam. Das Dorf lag in tiefem Schnee. Vom Schlossberg war nichts zu sehen. Nebel und Finsternis umgaben ihn, auch nicht der schwächste Lichtschein deutete das grosse Schloss an. Lange stand K. auf der Holzbrücke, die von der Landstrasse zum Dorf führte, und blickte in die scheinbare Leere empor.

Secondly, this short passage contains three punctuation errors that no A-level student would get away with. German punctuation follows strict rules intended to clarify the syntactic structure of the sentence, and Brod observed these rules in inserting commas between Kafka's main and subordinate clauses. But Kafka's own punctuation appears to follow the rhythms of speech. After two abrupt introductory sentences, the paragraph launches into a series of main clauses whose flow receives the briefest possible interruptions, indicated by commas instead of full stops; while the last sentence, lacking internal

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And here, from the critical edition, is what Kafka wrote:

Es war spät abends als K. ankam. Das Dorf lag in tiefem Schnee. Vom Schlossberg war nichts zu sehen. Nebel und Finsternis umgaben ihn, auch nicht der schwächste Lichtschein deutete das grosse Schloss an. Lange stand K. auf der Holzbrücke, die von der Landstrasse zum Dorf führte, und blickte in die scheinbare Leere empor.

(The Muirs' translation of this paragraph runs as follows:

It was late in the evening when K. arrived. The village was deep in snow. The Castle hill was hidden, veiled in mist and darkness, not was there even a glimmer of light to show that a castle was there. On the wooden bridge leading from the main road to the village K. stood for a long time gazing into the illusory emptiness above him.)

First, Kafka's text acquires a Prague German flavour from the dialect form "abend". Brod replaced it with the standard "abends" and removed other "Pragisms", elsewhere correcting Kafka's "paar" ("a couple"), for example, to "ein paar", and changing his very colloquial "um was" into "worum". Yet it is important to know that Kafka's written German was tinged with dialect, for he himself declared that German was a moribund language and that only its dialects and the most personal High German retained any life. The critical edition, therefore, has restored the original vitality of Kafka's German.

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God, A Poem

Anatoly surprise in a sandwich,
A drawing-pin caught in your sock,
The lippest of shakes from a hand which
You'd thought would be firm as a rock,

A serious mistake in a nightlo,
A grave disapproval from all round
Is all that you'll get from th' Almighty,
Is all that you'll get underground.

Oh he said: 'If you lay off the crumple
I'll see you alright in the and.
Just hang on until the last trumpet.
Have faith in me, ekum — I'm your friend'

But if you remind him, he'll tell you
'I'm sorry, I must have been pleased
Though your name rings a sort of bell. You
Should have guessed that I do not exist.

'I didn't exist at Creation,
I didn't exist at the Flood,
And I won't be around for Salvation
To sort out the sheep from the bad —

'Or whatever the phrase is. The fact is
Is not theological terms
I'm a crude existential malpractice
And you are a diet of worms.

'You're a nasty surprise in a sandwich,
You're a drawing-pin caught in my sock.
You're the lippest of shakes from a hand which
I'd have thought would be firm as a rock.

'You're a serious mistake in a nightlo,
You're a grave disappointment all round —
That's all that you are, says th' Almighty,
'And that's all that you'll be underground.

James Fenton

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Stalemate without end

Masolino d'Amico

ROBERTO CALASSO

La rovina di Kasch
495pp. Milan: Adelphi. L. 20,000.

The African myth of the city of Kasch became known in the west after an old camel-driver told Leo Frobenius, the German ethnologist, the legend concerning its fall. It was customary there that each king reigned until the priests, who kept a constant watch on the sky for signs, found that the time had come for his ritual execution; they then appointed a new king. But one day a foreigner who was a marvellous storyteller arrived in Kasch. He enchanted everyone, including the priests, who forgot to watch the sky, so that the moment for the king's execution passed unnoticed. The rule was abolished, the king died a natural death, and the story-teller became his successor. Under the storyteller's new laws Kasch flourished, but it grew too prosperous. A neighbouring city's envy was stirred, a bitter war ensued, and Kasch was destroyed.

This Wildean apologue is given a pivotal position in Roberto Calasso's majestic book — surely the most intriguing to have been published in Italy in an otherwise uneventful year. *La rovina di Kasch* is easier to read than to describe: it is not a narrative, but an inexhaustible mine of anecdotes; not an essay, but an endless string of brilliant insights into literature, history, philosophy, economics, politics; in short, into the makings of the un-makings of the modern world. Under forty-seven headings ("Gothic in Venice"; "Upon Taste"; "About Port-Royal"; "Glosses on Marx"; "Ricardo's mercilessness"; "Mundus pater") are gathered a multitude of loosely connected passages of varying length, aphorisms of a couple of lines or tracts which

never exceed a few pages. The result is reminiscent of Hegel's *Aesthetics*; it could also be described as an extended prose version of *The Waste Land*. There are no footnotes but fifty pages of sources for the hundreds of quotations appear at the end. There is no index of names; but if there had been it would have contained, among others, these of Benham, Fénelon, Baudelaire, Chateaubriand, Napoleon, De Maistre, Stirner, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Walter Benjamin, Nietzsche, Laforgue, Elias Canetti, Sade, Simone Weil, Freud, Spengler, Proust, Léon Bloy, Lucrétius, Aeschylus, Céline, Saint-Simon. In *La rovina di Kasch* one meets with chronicles of the French Revolution; interpretations of Indian mythology; descriptions of primitive rituals; news from Port-Royal. There is also a triumphantly sarcastic confutation of Marxism, beginning with a comparison between the young Marx and Rastignac.

The unifying force of all these apparently unconnected if unforgivingly penetrating remarks is of course the author's vast reading in several languages, including his own (true, no Italian is mentioned by name, but Calasso's writing is as concise as Croce's. He must have read the best Italian writers only for their style.) A director of Adelphi — the most ambitious, most exclusive and most respected of the "minor" Italian publishing houses — for almost twenty years, Calasso was taught by Mario Praz, and graduated from Rome University with a thesis on Sir Thomas Browne. Later, he became very close to Elémire Zolla, to Theodor Adorno, and to Roberto Bazlen, the force behind Adelphi and *Emme* of Italian publishing, and friend of Svevo and Montale.

Ostensibly, though, *La rovina di Kasch* has a theme: the collapse of Western civilization following the loss of contact with the sacred. In Kasch,

earthly delights (or the stories told by the foreigner) dazzled the priests and made them forget their duty towards the Unknown. Disaster followed, and this is what has happened in our own society. The irony, as Calasso points out, is that when man gives up the practice of shedding sacrificial blood, it does not lead to peace; rather, men turn his thirst for blood to other, less elevated ends, without even bethinking to update his language. We still speak of "victims", "sacrifice", or "holocaust", in connection, say, with First World War trench warfare, bystanders killed by urban bomb explosions, or with Pel Pot, whose activities in Cambodia were the last re-enactment of a pattern which has been familiar since the French Revolution.

The stratification of the dead (in Cambodia's common burial phases) sums up our Canonical phases: the corpses in the lowest layer wear shreds of motley robes, they are the faithful of Lon Nol (the Ancien Régime); then, moving upwards, we find the Buddhist

priests (the refractory divines); then, a few nondescript civilians (Public Health police who have run amok); at last we see the dark rags of the Khmer Rouge themselves (the real Jacobins, the true holocausts, plotters and renegades).

In the past there was a stable, *de-natured* relationship with the Unknown. Man paid in advance, as it were, and in cash, for everything he received. When this was forgotten, values were overthrown and confusion prevailed. History for Calasso is neither progress, nor development, but the endless repetition of stalemate; man is a trapped beast who kills his fellow prisoners in an impossible attempt to escape. Art is powerless to change this situation, but it can lend some colour to predicaments of otherwise unbearable squalor. Thus of all products of the modern world, art is the most justifiable, especially when it attacks human stupidity and self-satisfaction — Flaubert, Bloy, Karl Kraus — or better still, when it only expresses itself (as in "decadence").

Centuries, maybe even millennia of such blasphemy cannot be repeated, to do nothing, as Lao Tzu maintained, is therefore the only coherent way to behave. Calasso's theme is the notorious tumult, the *La rovina di Kasch*. A bishop under Louis XVI, a people's deputy during the Revolution, Napoleon's foreign secretary, and Louis XVIII's main supporter, he was still going strong with Louis Philippe, after yet another revolution. Talleyrand's very existence was a mockery of all ideologies, an exposure of the frailty of man's constantly revived delusion of being able to change things. He cut everything down to the size of a grain of salt, the only conceivable temple in modern times. Talleyrand ridiculed contemporary politics and contemporary religion the returned to respectability by signing an apology to the Church nine hours before he died, and for his renouveau Calasso sees him as the really admirable character in recent history.

Tips for tyrannicides

Martin Clark

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI

Manlio
443pp. Internationl Institute of Shadowland Studies, 1025 Shadowland Way, Sarasota, Florida 33581, USA.
9 29013 0024

Manlio is Garibaldi's last novel, written between 1874 and 1879 and published now, in Italian, for the first time. After such a delay, the question of authenticity naturally arises. Not

having spent an afternoon in the vaults, I cannot be absolutely certain; but there seems little reason for suspicion. The book is edited and introduced by Anthony P. Campanella, a very well-known and respected Garibaldi scholar; and anyway no sense forger could have hoped to make a fortune from Manlio.

The novel is a stirring adventure story, full of battles by land and by sea. It is set in a Tintin-esque world of tinpot dictators and heroic bandits, of dastardly villains and degenerate priests, of virtuous maidens and noble effections. No character has the slightest reality, even though the hero Manlio existed in real life — he was Garibaldi's youngest son, born in 1873. The book purports to describe his youthful adventures and "military" exploits, which are remarkably like those of Garibaldi himself. Born in Italy, he goes off to South America, battles against tyrants, liberates a few oppressed nations, and then returns to Italy to free his brothers in northern Italy from the hateful Austrian yoke.

The narrative is regularly interrupted by Garibaldi's asides and reminiscences ("how could anyone forget that here, in Luncheon..."), and so it has some interest as yet another version of Garibaldi's memoirs, particularly since over half of it is set in Brazil and Uruguay. The memoirs are, not surprisingly, somewhat confused. Garibaldi's life consisted of an endless series of campaigns, and it must have been difficult in old age to remember where and when he had fought, or why. But there is a good description of the battle of Copacabana, and it is appropriate today to be reminded that Garibaldi fought for years against the Argentinians, his greatest opponent being (the Irish) Admiral Brown in his flagship, the *General Belgrano*.

But the novel is not just reminiscence, nor escapist fiction. Essentially it is a call to arms, and is dedicated "to Italian youth". Italy had been unified, but not completely, and now she was just as oppressed as ever. She needed some noble hero to lead the struggle for liberation: Manlio is a voice prophesying war. It is a true irreverent or "interventionist" novel, a precursor of Oriani or D'Annunzio, a tale of heroic patriotism and crusading fervour. The hero, on returning from South America, gathers a band of oathsworn — Garibaldi is quite clear that Italy must control the Adriatic — and, while he is at it, defeats the Turks, liberates Crete, conquers the German navy and finally takes Trent and Trieste to the plaudits of civilized humanity. Garibaldi obviously flagged a bit at the end, the actual capture of Trent and Trieste is all over in five pages or so, and with the book, but then, it happened that way in 1918.

Manlio also tells us much about Garibaldi's moral certainties and political simplicities. On war, Garibaldi quotes his old enemy General Rosas approvingly — it is "the true life of man", demonstrating all the most noble qualities; yet it would be unnecessary, if people were as enslaved by menarches and priests, and it should be replaced by international arbitration. As for Garibaldi's own wars, he was forced into them by the need to liberate the people from tyranny. There is nothing much wrong with the world that a few good tyrannicides would not put right, especially if followed by good dictators to wipe out corruption. The greatest villains of all, both in the narrative and in Garibaldi's map asides, are priests. Hypocrites and liars by definition, they are to blame for most wars, and it is they who benefit most from "the crass error of liberty for all".

Garibaldi had many grievances in old age, and displays all of them here. Nice and Corsica had been lost, unnecessarily. A horde of pharisees and pelicanen forced him to sterve amolized. The left system was irredeemably corrupt. Stinking armies served only to protect corrupt governments and, like the military power, they also conspired the honesty and left the rest at home in the "Italic race" had become degenerate; governments, swept by the tide of the masses, were servile and incompetent and should give prizes to foreign nations with healthy offspring. The people, especially the priest-ridden masses, were servile and incompetent and should give prizes to foreign nations with healthy offspring. The people, especially the priest-ridden masses, were servile and incompetent and should give prizes to foreign nations with healthy offspring.

Still, Garibaldi usually maintains a calm masculine confidence, and his intelligence and humanity are evident. He has sensible remarks about why Italian sailors jump ship in America, about why he himself continued once begun, and about how prisoners-of-war should be treated. He recognizes the "white" treatment of Indians in America for what it was, a genocide. But he is no novel writer. He knew little of human biology, and he is no novelist. He has for his only love, though, he has for the cause of the oppressed, and he is not a novelist. He has for his only love, though, he has for the cause of the oppressed, and he is not a novelist.

CHINA

The voice of the New Culture

W.J.F. Jenner

SHERMAN COCHRAN, ANDREW C.K. HSEH and JANIS COCHRAN

One Day in China: May 21, 1936
200pp. Yale University Press. £17.50.
0300 02834 2

A short-sighted man goes to the cinema with a woman in a remote provincial town, pleased both because she has defied gossip to do so and also because she reads the subtitles to him; afterwards they discuss the heroine's melodramatic suicide. Petty officials exchange salacious comments on a local rape case. A green-eyed English missionary bangs the pupils in his school, pounding the desk with his "big, tough, hairy fist". A family depends on maize to eat and drink at their in-laws' expense because one of their women who had married into the other household has killed herself. A schoolteacher in her forties ceases to alter her young son living far away by taking full of her exhortations to be a "youthful" man.

Over eighty such moments make up *One Day in China*, a selection from the 499 contributions included in the original Chinese version of this book published in the autumn of 1936. These in turn were chosen from over three thousand pieces submitted in response to advertisements placed in a few radical magazines and the leading local newspaper *Shen Bao*. The advertisements invited anyone and everyone to submit up to two thousand characters — equivalent to 1,500 English words or less — on events on a list chosen at random, May 21. Photographs and graphics were also requested. The rewards would be publication in a volume under the chief editorship of Mao Dun, the famous

univelist, and a fee. The former would probably have been the stronger incentive: then as now to have one's work printed was an ambition stronger and more widespread in China than in the West.

The publisher of the venture was a house with leftist tendencies that could not have functioned but for the tolerance or indifference of the colonial authorities in the foreign-run enclave of Shanghai, the International Settlement. Being with, but not exactly of, the Communist Party, it could also be used by a group of intellectuals who, untripped at the way the country was failing to resist Japan's growing aggression, wanted unity against the foreign enemy but were not prepared to forget the evil of China's own rulers. The Communist Party's cultural bosses in Shanghai had recently made a U-turn of the sort that their erstwhile literary associates found hard to take. The League of Left-Wing Writers, a body as militant in word as in deed, had suddenly been dissolved as an embarrassment; the new line was that all other issues should be subordinated to the need for a united front against Japan. The editors of the original *One Day* were among those who would not stop being beastly about the Chinese people's own weaknesses in order to ally with internal foes who had already feigned repeatedly to resist Japan. Effective resistance could only be built up from below. Mao Dun and his fellow-editors wanted a much tougher Chinese policy towards Japan — hence the large number of anti-Japanese pieces in this volume — but China's own problems received most space in their book.

The views of these problems and of the chosen day came from an unrepresentative sample of the Chinese population. First, only literates of leftist or liberal inclinations would have seen the advertisements

asking for contributions. Of those who sent in pieces nearly all were male. Half of them were teachers or students, and most of the rest professionals. Peasants, few out of five of the population, provided only four out of every thousand contributions; and women only some five per cent. I am not quite sure what Jonathan Spence means when he writes on the jacket that the book, whether in its original form or in this English selection, "offers a wondrously comprehensive overview of the Chinese people — as they described themselves at home, in barracks and offices, in the countryside, in schools and churches". Perhaps he was a little unsure too — hence the overblown "wondrously".

The original *One Day* was thus a book put together from contributions by a limited range of people by editors with a polemical purpose in mind. They were inspired by the example of the volume of popular front propaganda, *A Day in the World*, that Maxim Gorky had called for the previous year but which did not appear till 1937. (Maxim Gorky was definitely in among Chinese writers the year when Lu Xun died in October he was endlessly compared with Stalin's apostle, though a much stronger candidate for that doubtful honour would be Guo Moruo, a cosmopolitan turned leader-worshipper in his old age). Mao Dun and his editors worked with great speed to bring out their large volume within a few months of their original advertisements for contributions.

The editors of this English selection are right to point out in their introduction that "by its very design this project appealed more to the outspoke and disgruntled than to the contented or complacent", so that their picture is a dark one. What we have here are mainly the postures that educated younger males and a few women of radical inclinations wanted

to strike in public. It is the attitudes of the writers rather than what they describe, which in some places appears to be an improvement on mere truth, that can be most accurately assessed from the book. Traditional superstition and attitudes to women and marriage, for example, are shown from a superior and even supercilious position. How sickening it all is, the writers appear to be saying, and how I thank fate that I am not part of the ignorant herd. Authority tends to be shown as corrupt and incompetent. The Japanese, who at the time had yet to suffer anything more than temporary local setbacks in their march of conquest, could not be directly attacked, for that would have led in trouble from the Settlement authorities, who had to avoid giving offence to their extremely touchy fellow-imperialists. Some of the expressions of superiority over the Japanese are reminiscent of the victories that Lu Xun's peasant hero, Ah Q, scored by finding himself a form of words that turned a real setback into an imaginary triumph. Contemptuous thoughts could be a safety-valve for helpless anger. More useful were the pieces reminding the nation of its humiliation.

It is this tendency to strike a pose that is both irritating and instructive for the Western reader. The contributors apparently feel no need to see things through their own eyes or describe them in their own ways. Instead they are satisfied with the conventional thoughts and expressions that twenty years of the New Culture movement had spread to almost anyone with secondary education. The book is in many ways a tribute to the influence of countless schoolteachers in large and

small towns who had spread the new orthodoxies — orthodoxies which were to do much to help bring the Communist Party to power in 1949 before coming, under savage attack from the middle 1950s till the late 1970s.

Among the things that readers of the English version will miss are most of the illustrations to the original and the fascinating selections from newspapers of the chosen day covering all sorts of things from national politics to the films and operas then showing. Another thing they will be unable to assess is the style of the original pieces, which is destroyed by translations so painstakingly literal that one is constantly being brought to a halt by unsayable dialogue: "It is very good not only that you are able to achieve something you always wanted, but even that Muger and his wife can occupy a good piece of land in the ancestral graveyard and the underworld — and can be of some comfort to you." To translate in this way is to be faithful to the actual words of the original even if the speaker is thereby made to sound absurdly stilted, and it is a problem often encountered in American translations from Chinese.

One hesitates to raise such issues as this in connection with a book that has many good things in it, has evidently been produced with the best of intentions, and has been conscientiously edited with plenty of introductions and notes. But as long as such an approach to the translation of Chinese is regarded as correct it will ensure that Chinese culture is kept out of the mainstream of educated consciousness in the English-speaking countries. Literalness is not enough.

The self-made hero

Shirley Vinal

PAOLO ALATRI

Giuseppe D'Annunzio

669pp. Turin: UTET. L. 44,000.
88 02 03691 8

In the opinion of Stelio Effroni, the hero of D'Annunzio's novel *Il Fuoco*, every intelligent man should be able to "creare la propria favola bella". Paolo Alatri, in his very welcome new biography of D'Annunzio, clearly demonstrates the consistent presence in Effroni's creator of this desire to shape his life into a beautiful work of art. It was reflected in his tendency to impose his existence into a heroic key in his writings, as well as in his luxurious style of living. The same desire underlies his apparently diverse roles in life — the *fin de siècle* aesthete, the aspiring supman, the bard of nationalism, the war hero, the *Comandante* of illegally seized Fiume, wielding absolute power in the manner of a Renaissance despot, and finally the embittered near-recluse of the Vittoriale, a prisoner of his own myth.

However, D'Annunzio's immense influence over the literary themes, language, and even the manners and interior decor of his contemporaries, and his transformation from a poet into a political activist who at one time seemed more likely than Mussolini to head a right-wing coup, are matters difficult to understand in isolation, and without careful analysis of the literary, social and political climate of newly unified Italy. This new biography aims to provide exactly such a context, and Alatri, the author of several historical works on the period, including an important study of the Fiume question, is well qualified to write it.

Thus the chapter on D'Annunzio's early career includes not only an excellent brief analysis of Italian decadence but also considerations on such issues as the cultural atmosphere

of Rome at the time, the new phenomenon of the literary figure working in mass journalism, D'Annunzio's intended readership, and his view of the literary work as a commodity to be advertised and sold. Similarly, the following chapter includes a section which sets the ideas expressed in D'Annunzio's 1892 article "La bestia olettiva" in the context of contemporary anti-democratic and anti-parliamentary currents. D'Annunzio's subsequent use of Nietzsche's idea of the supman is clearly shown to reflect not just private ambitions but also the aspirations and dreams of national glory nurtured by the Italian middle class. Then, in examining the changing balance in D'Annunzio's ideology during the first decade of the twentieth century, between the cult of beauty and increasingly nationalistic aims, Alatri focuses particularly on the public impact of D'Annunzio's plays, and relates his influence to the emergence of nationalism as a political movement.

D'Annunzio's role in the 1915 interventionist crisis is carefully assessed, and his unique position during the war plausibly explained. By stressing D'Annunzio's prestige among the various nationalist and monarchist groups which flourished in the post-war settlement, and by emphasizing the common ground between their ideology and his, Alatri explains how D'Annunzio came to lead the occupation of Fiume, in which all this extremism converged, and which he shows to have been intended as a predominantly right-wing challenge to Italy's institutions. After a detailed examination of D'Annunzio's conduct, attitudes and support during the occupation, Alatri argues that D'Annunzio himself can be seen as a symptom of the crisis in Italian society and that, whatever his personal views, fascism can be considered objectively as a descendant of *dannunzianesimo*.

Alatri does not neglect D'Annunzio's writings; he shares Salimata's view (now widely held by students of D'Annunzio) that the ideology of the supman lies at the core of his

inspiration, and is thus able to present a unified picture of the writer and political activist. In the course of the biography, Alatri evaluates each of the major works in a series of extremely useful and up-to-date surveys of critical opinion.

A would-be biographer of D'Annunzio, compelled to trace simultaneously the course of his subject's turbulent private life, literary career, and political involvement, is faced with a potential conflict between the demands of chronology and those of clarity of argument. Alatri resolves this dilemma very effectively: the seven long chapters, each devoted to a period of D'Annunzio's life, are divided into short sub-sections, dealing with separate aspects. Alatri's own style is clear and straightforward, but the extensive use of quotations from other scholars, while usually very valuable, does not make for easy reading. The decision to omit reference numbers from the text — presumably to make it more readable — is mistaken: despite the very useful notes at the end, it is not possible to trace the exact source of all the quotations.

This well-documented, dispassionate, and superbly balanced approach is a far cry from the adult, and gossipy tone of some of Alatri's predecessors. While debunking some legends and describing D'Annunzio's faults frankly, he takes care to give him credit, for instance, for his wartime bravery. However, since, as Alatri stresses, attitudinizing is inherent in D'Annunzio's writing, his task is difficult to penetrate. Alatri's convincing synthesis, the breadth and depth of which surely make it a definitive biography, concentrates on the sociological and political explanations for D'Annunzio's ideology, and his appeal, alluding to possible individual or psychological reasons only in one brief paragraph. Thus, the "D'Annunzio" phenomenon is very capably explained, but the man himself remains somewhat elusive.

Out from the shadows

D.E. Pollard

Simon Leys

La Part en deux: Essais sur la culture politique chinoise
200pp. Paris: Hermann, 76fr.
1766 5953 6

The book appears to be the answer of Simon Leys, that notorious translator of Chairman Mao and all his ilk, to the question of the Chinese Revolution. With his books *Les Héros naïfs du pouvoir* (1971) and *Ombres chinoises* (1975), his cover reveals that he himself has always been no more than a clerk, the throw of a shadow, the reflection of the masses, the puppet of the Chinese revolution. Though their identity was not very closely guarded, the two authors led a separate life. Leys, a Frenchman, was widely known and cherished in China in the old days; with the Prague Spring also in mind, the world awaits the genius who will update that sentiment. The other pieces, "close" Leys' case against Western experts and new China-hands who either kept their mouths shut about the abominations of the Cultural Revolution or who dismissed the evidence as calumny. Certain individuals, like Han Suyin and Ross Terrill, get it in the neck. Leys' edge is unusually sharp. No wonder, these attacks do not appear to be written out of petty animus, but rather to expose the veins of folly. Leys' quotations, widely culled, raise his entourage in another tongue: the "conscience" of the master craftsman, Lu Xun.

The bridge between Leys and Ryckmans is the notion of China as "une histoire, une poésie, une civilisation" — a spirit of the human spirit, a "l'esprit de la civilisation", which Leys credits to Claude Roy and Edmond Leys. Leys does not elaborate it, Ryckmans's business is to do so. His contribution in this volume is "Poésie et peinture, aspects de l'histoire chinoise classique", a

thirty-page essay that expands on the well-known dictum of Su Dongpo that "in every poem of Wang Wei there is a painting, and in every painting a poem". It brings in various Chinese metaphysical ideas and explains the virtue of emptiness, supplying some interesting cross-cultural comparisons. Edifying for students of both poetry and painting, it is probably dangerous stuff for practitioners of those arts.

The longest article can be safely recommended to all. It is a guide to a guide to the Chinese empire by the Marxist missionary Régis-Evariste Hue, published in 1854. *L'Empire chinois* was a sequel to *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie et le Tibet*, which it could not hope to rival in singularity. The solid account of this voyage through four provinces was therefore subject to embellishment and exaggeration by Ryckmans. At the same time, he warns to Hue's exploits and endures his observations. Hue's descriptions and dramatizations are indeed marvellous in their colour and humour. Confirmation that he was describing the reality of China comes from remarks on habits that persist today, like the one about unsolicited "doffings": "Lorsqu'un quelconque écrit, pour peu qu'on soit curieux, on n'a qu'à se pencher pardessus ses épaules et lire, sans se gêner, les caractères qu'il trace; on n'y met pas plus de façons". Parenthetically one might add that conversations are even more public property; it always seems unpardonable when in China to switch, for the sake of discretion, out of Chinese and into those listening ears.

Ryckmans is a good scholar, where as Hue apparently was not that good a churchman, but one wonders whether there is not an element of fraternity in Ryckmans's estimation of Hue. Hue is not only a man of letters, but a man of letters. Hue is not only a man of letters, but a man of letters. Hue is not only a man of letters, but a man of letters.

Campbell's analysis bristles with incisive asides and prescriptions that are likely to require consideration by reformers in each of the three countries. Few books in this subject area are based on empirical research, especially on this scale... a remarkable achievement!
RICHARD A. CHAPMAN, Department of Politics, Durham University

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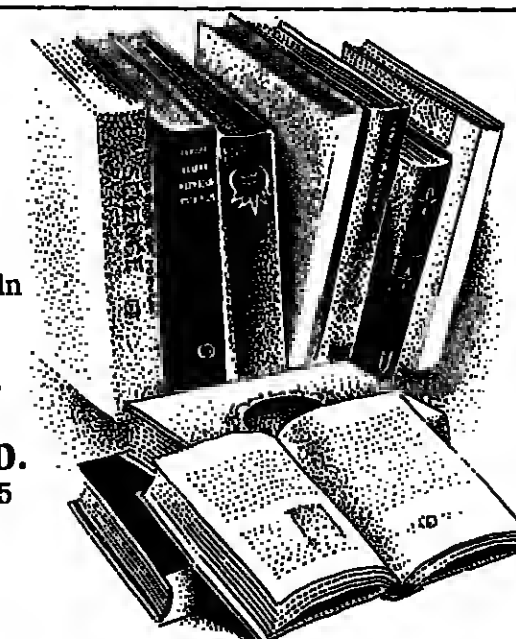
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Archives of Africa in Oxford

Ingrid Thomas and Alan Bell

There is no formally constituted "African Studies Centre" at Oxford, such as are found at several other British universities, yet it has a number of institutions which make it very much a centre for African studies, with a long-standing tradition of teaching and research, and a full array of library resources to support advanced study in a wide range of subjects. Since its foundation over fifty years ago Rhodes House Library – the American and Commonwealth studies section of the Bodleian – has had a special responsibility for manuscript material of African interest, as shown by its major holdings of Livingstone correspondence, its Anti-Slavery Society archives, and of course its Cecil Rhodes papers, to choose only a few examples from earlier acquisitions.

In 1963 the archive side of Rhodes House Library's work was transformed by the foundation of the Oxford Colonial Records Project, for which it became the principal destination for manuscript material solicited from all then traceable former officials of the old Colonial Office territories – a wide geographical spread, in which Africa was naturally the largest element. Oxford's role in administrative training courses made it an obvious centre; historians (including Margery Perham) were there to advise, and an experienced administrator was to hand in J. J. Tawney, whose energy and skill elicited so many deposits from his former Colonial Service colleagues. The results of a decade's work by the Colonial Records Project may be seen in the summary catalogues of *Monographs: Africa*, compiled by the then Rhodes House Librarian, Louis B. Ffrench, and published by the Bodleian in 1968, with two supplements (1971 and 1978); a further supplement is now being prepared.

The OCRP was run on a shoestring

budget, yet it was astonishingly successful in gathering documents from a widespread but loyal constituency of retired officials. It was far-sighted in its attention to oral history, conducting a series of interviews to complement the archival material which it collected. The manuscripts themselves – ranging from District Officers' letters home, personal correspondence files, diaries, photograph albums and "handing-over" notes, to Governors' papers at a higher level of policy-making – have already shown their importance in countless theses and books, and they have much more to yield to historians.

The Colonial Records Project was wound up in 1972, with Rhodes House Library continuing to receive and process the further donations which had arrived as a result of the Project's instigation. It soon became clear that the period between the end of the Second World War and the advent of Independence was under-represented in these collections, and that the papers of a later generation of colonial administrators were of potential interest not only to historians but even possibly for the guidance of those involved in later development planning in Africa. A new undertaking – the Oxford Development Records Project – was therefore begun to complement the earlier scheme, this time with an emphasis on a number of selected themes in development work, such as the intensification of African agriculture in Kenya (the Swynnerton plan), education at all levels from primary school administration to the setting up of universities, and the transfer of power in Nyasaland (now Malawi).

Over the years Rhodes House Library has had to deal with some very sizeable collections, such as the records of the Fobian Colonial Bittenu (and the papers of Arthur Creech Jones), and

the Africa Bureau's archives with their full record of the work in southern Africa of the late Revd Michael Scott and his associates. Inventories of these and other collections were compiled by archivists funded mainly by outside foundations, and similar support had to be sought when the library was faced with the papers of Dame Margery Perham, by far the largest bequest it has ever received. Dame Margery's long and active career as historian and commentator on African affairs, as instructor of administrators and monitor of governors, and as friend and biographer of Lord Lugard, produced a vast quantity of documentation which came to Rhodes House after her death. At present the Perham papers after a first sorting find over 600 standard archive boxes. With acquisitions on this scale (A.T. Mutton's historical collections and correspondence relating to Kenya may also be mentioned as another very recent large acquisition), space is rapidly running out, and urgent problems of additional accommodation will soon have to be faced.

From a conservationist's point of view, the materials gathered by the Projects already give much cause for concern. The quality of paper used by

colonial administrators was not high, and the masses of carbon-copy correspondence on filmstrips, the duplicator papers, and the manifold folders that contain them are actually sour and brittle, with the certainty of further chemical deterioration. The sheer quantities involved may make leaf-by-leaf conservation impractical for the foreseeable future, and a large-scale programme of security microfilming seems the best option. Fortunately the interest being shown by several African nations in securing copies of documents relating to their territories provides a further impetus to such an enterprise. Several collections are already too fragile for frequent handling and the availability of microforms in appropriate national archives in Africa may help in reduce wear and tear; others will have to be locked away with only the copies available for consultation.

Special conservation measures are also being planned to deal with the library's photographic collections – over 40,000 prints of all periods, with some important collections of early negatives. Tape recordings also need special care, and many of the early Colonial Records Project recordings have already been transferred to

better-quality tapes for longer preservation.

Such work inevitably requires money, time and staff, and all are in short supply. Nevertheless it is possible to make some progress in basic housekeeping with very limited resources. In the immediate future, existing funding for the Oxford Development Records Project is due to run out in mid-1984, except for the final stages of its publication programme – though an effort will certainly be made to seek further support to continue some aspects of the Project's work.

The international research contingent attracted to Rhodes House Library every year shows again and again how important are the semi-official records of colonial administrators, with their working papers, diaries and private correspondence, in complementing the official Colonial Office papers in the Public Record Office. It would be the greatest of cities if any opportunity were lost to improve the already rich stock of these archives of the British experience in Africa, archives which moreover are clearly recognized as a major source for the history of the independent African nations.

Faith in the medium

Robert Campbell

When the late Sir Arthur Norrington started as an editor at Oxford University Press he was faced with a room full of manuscripts that had accumulated, often without acknowledgment, under his predecessor. He told me that it was the hardest year of his life working through those teetering piles of typescript, seeking opinions, submitting reports to the Delegates and so on, but his career in publishing was not over yet. The end of the year he and a colleague stood by the fire of the now empty room and shared a bottle of sherry to celebrate the achievement. He placed one foot on the coal-scuttle which had been revealed beneath the papers, then kicked it to see if it might still contain any coal for the fire. Two manuscripts slid out.

Publishing has changed since, but not enough according to Kenneth Baker, who has ministered responsibilities for information technology and the publishing industry. He has been haranguing publishers over their failure to innovate, and seize the opportunities offered by new technology. Perhaps if he actually made real funds available to finance his ventures we could move forward more quickly but as it is, we have to make a living by what we sell. The market dictates our progress and generally "users", as information scientists call them, prefer to read books or "hard-copy" rather than screens, although in the sciences there are signs of change, particularly in North America.

Possibly the recent sharp decline in library spending could jolt the publishing community into using new media. Certainly the scare in 1973-4 when the oil crisis led to a sharp rise in the price of books and a drop in sales made a number of publishers seriously consider a new medium and then the only alternative to print on paper was microfilm.

I was involved in setting up a microform (essentially microfilm) production and distribution company in those days, and we were visited almost daily by publishers and learned societies – both from the United Kingdom and abroad, all wanting to explore the publishing potential of microfilm. A very small percentage actually went ahead with a microform project and the level of activity in microform publishing has remained at 25 per cent of those publishers who visited us, but initiated a microform series then, our libraries would look very different now.

Those involved in microform publishing still believe in the medium, despite the frustration by the limited number of viewing devices and

continue to dream of the day when a major organization decides to invest heavily in a microform project, and thus force microfiche out of its dark corners to become a genuine consumer product. (The latest ray of hope is the rumour that Kodak have patented equipment which takes their disc film and displays it on a television; such a device could be easily converted for microfiche.) They cling to the principle that the text is all that matters and not its physical form, as characterized by Michel Butor in *Inventories*:

The fact that the book, as we know it today, has rendered the greatest services to the mind for several centuries in no way implies that it is indispensable. A civilisation of the book might well be replaced by a civilisation of recordings. More sentimental attachment, like that kind our grandparents cultivated for a ghost for some years obviously serves more than an indulgent smile. I once knew an old lady who claimed that an lexikon produced a better quality of cold than a refrigerator.

The role of microfilm probably lies in storing texts of insufficient appeal to justify conventional publication for printing out through the fairly common photocopy viewer devices. Reading such photocopies is preferable to peering at an illuminated screen. In this way microforms can establish their own appeal: they have to be searched, hunted for, they cannot be enjoyed passively like conventional printed text. Saul Bellow uses this in his novel *Mr Sammler's Planet*: the hero, old, alienated (from Chicago) and omniscient (having been personally involved in every major twentieth-century crisis) is ending his days by going downtown to the library every afternoon to read Meister Eckhart in Latin on microfilm. The microfilm is housed in its own hostile, location, where Chicago is the outer casing which Sammler has to penetrate at his risk, and the microfilm is consulted after a pilgrimage, like the drifter.

The microform publishers, therefore, have two tasks: firstly, to reduce the physical barrier between the reader and the text by encouraging the development of better viewers; and, secondly, to collect or create material of sufficient interest, albeit specialized, to induce people to use their medium. There is evidence that younger generations, more accustomed to screens, find no problems with the medium, but they have recently been given the microcomputer, which, by comparison, renders the microform viewer clumsy and dated. An intermediate technology is now superseding. The publishers are left with their last resource, their ability

to come up with a product that has its own market.

Archival material is a prime subject. It is often bulky and difficult to store, with only limited interest, rarely of wide enough appeal to carry the cost of conventional publication, or indeed the cost of keyboarding or scanning for storage in machine-readable form for computer access. Sometimes the owners of the archives themselves have their material microfilmed for rapid access, and to save on wear and tear of the original documents, and thus save or off of the cost of filming is covered. The publisher still needs to invest in the publication – for besides the original filming it must be planned carefully to fit the medium and will usually require the "added value" of an index. The overkill involved in this and the relation to the small number of orders, which is why microform publishers look for large projects justifying sufficiently high-selling prices to cover these overheads.

The somewhat buccaneer image of the early microform publishers who sought the easy collection or even reproduced microfilm originally intended for archival use as opposed to publication has changed. The microform publishers have largely reformed, to become a genuine part of the publishing community employing their medium creatively. For example, the inherent problems (a listing of producing a concordance has in the index of words in context) has in the past limited this method of studying text to the Bible. But there are now well-established computer programs for concordancing large bodies of text. The cost of publishing the resulting long lists printed out from the computer by conventional means is still prohibitive. The concordance can, however, be produced on COM (computer output microfilm) and in this form it can be published at a fraction of the cost of conventional printing. This opens up possibilities for concordances for textual, language and concordance studies. The first COM concordance was in Roman Law and was published by the Clarendon Press with the help of Oxford Microform Publications. Such was the success of this venture that Oxford Microform Publications have gone on to develop a series of concordances starting with the works of Virginia Woolf, using the WATCON concordance program pecked up from the University of Waterloo. What Virginia Woolf would make of her work only subjected to WATCON can only be imagined, but it does show that microforms can make a significant contribution to the publishing process.

Microforms, pro and contra

Bernard J. S. Williams

In the world of scholarship, microforms have remained something of an anomaly for well over a century. The development of microforms actually encompasses the development of photography itself: as early as 1839 the British inventor of microphotography – John Benjamin Dancer of Manchester – used the eyes of recently killed animals as lenses to produce minute photographic pictures. From the start, microforms have been a limited band of scholars and enthusiasts and, on the other, a mixture of scepticism and occasionally outright hostility from the rest of the scholarly world.

Within fourteen years of their invention the nineteenth-century microform was being promoted by the use of microforms for publishing, while a contemporary dictionary of photography dismissed them as "amusing curiosities". In the context of nineteenth-century scholarship the dictionary proved wholly correct. The present century has, however, gone some of the way to vindicating Dancer's microforms began making their first practical contribution in 1914 when 35mm roll film was used to record documents as an insurance against the ravages of war. In the late 1930s microforms advanced a stage further when American entrepreneurs – the most notable being Eugene Power – began using microforms as a medium to supply the rapidly growing libraries in the United States with copies of rare and irreplaceable documents in European institutions.

Microforms now occupy a small but niche in the world of literature and publishing. The term has been coined to embrace all media which involve the reduction of text to a size where it is unreadable to the unaided eye. The three major media now in use comprise 35mm and 16mm roll film and microfiche. 35mm

roll film is the pioneer medium – it was 35mm roll film which was used at the time of the First World War for preservation purposes. It is still the only medium which can cater easily for all classes of documentation. The relatively large frame size makes possible the recording of such items as a seventeenth-century broadsheet newspaper (probably in poor condition) at a modest reduction to achieve the optimum quality. For these reasons it remains the primary preservation medium used in libraries – the British Library Newspaper Division library in Colindale, for example, contains 140,000 reels of 35mm film. Yet in many other ways modern developments in the use of microfilm have passed by 35mm roll film.

The use of film in business and commerce is based on 16mm roll. Cartridges and cassettes – which are virtually unknown for 35mm film – are widely used to make the loading of reading equipment comparable to the loading of a modern cassette tape recorder. The film is frequently coded with image marks on each frame to make access on modern microchip-controlled reading equipment swift and easy. Increasingly the reading equipment is itself controlled by a microcomputer – in these systems the computer is used for indexing a collection of documents, the 16mm film for storage of the originals.

The microfiche – a flat sheet of film usually measuring 105 by 148mm and containing up to 420 pages of information – plays a major role in the scholarly publishing of specialized material. On microfiche you could, for example, have access to Christie's auction records, including a photograph and data on each item auctioned, for the past century, or you could examine a collection of medieval manuscripts, reproduced in colour. Modern aids available parallel those for 16mm film – the Daily Mirror for instance keeps its press clippings

file on microfiche which are automatically accessed by a computer-driven system.

Reviewing the contribution made by microforms to scholarship produces some interesting results: on the positive side they have undoubtedly rendered specialized material much more accessible – they have opened the contents of documents and collections which would otherwise have remained closed to everyone except the researcher ready and able to travel the world to seek out originals. Similarly, microforms have kept material available long after the original publications went out of print. *The Times Literary Supplement* is among thousands of newspaper and serial titles which remain available to libraries as back-runs on microfilm. Microforms can make this valuable contribution to scholarship because the cost of making master negatives is infinitesimal compared to conventional reprinting. Many major microform publishers work to "break even" sales of only ten copies in recouping the cost of the original recording (this aspect of microform publishing can make it a surprisingly lucrative business).

The case for using microforms as a preservation medium has also strengthened since 1914: the dangers of losing documents due to natural or man-made disasters remain as great as ever but two new aspects of preservation have emerged since then. Firstly, paper deterioration has become an increasing problem – modern paper with its built-in impurities might almost have been designed to "self-destruct" within an increasingly limited time-span. Secondly the increasing army of researchers (ranging from school children doing projects to authors writing books) have created massive problems of wear and tear on originals.

Useful as these two contributions are, there is of course a "flip-side" to

the case: many users do not like reading from microforms; many researchers insist on their need to handle originals. To take the second issue first, most conservationists would now argue that unless researchers have a credible need to handle originals they should, not to mince words, put up with any inconvenience, real or imagined, associated with using microforms. Most research is more concerned with information content than with physical bibliography – as long as the microform has reproduced the information content for optimum readability (unfortunately many originals are allowed to deteriorate before filming), the researcher should have no real objection to using the microform version.

How sensible is the objection to reading from microforms? It would be very difficult to argue that a microform-reader or, for that matter, an electronic display is easier on the eyes than a book. The need to use an optical or electronic display imposes constraints that are generally lacking when reading from paper. Firstly the reader will have to accommodate him or herself to the reading surface – there have been attempts to produce the archly named "cuddy" reading equipment, which can be held in the lap like a book, but none have achieved real success (although there is much to be said for light, compact readers which can be moved around on a desk to suit personal convenience). Similarly it is much more difficult to flip through the frames of a microform than the pages of a book.

Nevertheless the modern microform reader is a vast improvement over its predecessor of twenty years ago. It can be used in normal ambient light conditions, there is thus no need for microform reading to be reminiscent of one's last visit to the local cinema. Modern readers are indisputably better value for money and provide a variety of configurations – for intensive study over a prolonged period a front-projection

reader with a near-to-horizontal screen will prove much less tiring than a reader with a vertical screen.

If a document is conceived in the first place for publication on microform there are numerous ways of tailoring the presentation to match the characteristics of the microform. The increasing use of word processors in creating documents enables the microform to be produced directly from the digital data via a COM (computer output microfilm) record. Since the text-size and presentation can then be designed specifically for microform, the end-product will generally represent an improvement over the recording of a printed document. COM recording is competitive with conventional micro-recording for text, but there are some economic barriers to handling illustrated documents, especially those containing photographs.

Although there are significant technical developments still taking place – within micro-reproduction (notably the emergence of processes which provide for the instant and dry recording of documents – the microfilm camera equivalent of an office copier) the major changes affecting microforms are external to the technology itself. The days when the various methods of creating, reproducing, storing and retrieving documents stood alone as distinct technologies are past. This trend, often labelled "technology convergence" in the microforms field, has recently led to two of the world's major professional microform associations dropping the reference to micrographics in their titles in favour of "information management". The technology convergence which affects the microforms business is really an aspect of the new technology which threatens or promises (depending of course on your point of view) revolutionary changes within the world of publishing.

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